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Lancaster PA PRIDE 2016

DETAILS INSIDE!

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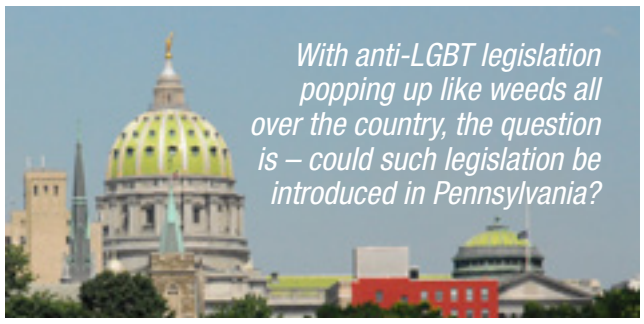
MAY | JUNE 2016



With anti-LGBT legislation popping up like weeds all over the country, the question is – could such legislation be introduced in Pennsylvania?

Anti-LGBT Legislation: Could It Happen Here?

ANALYSIS: BY FRANK PIZZOLI

Since *Central Voice* last reported (March-April 2016) about 107 anti-gay measures introduced in state legislatures nationwide, Pennsylvania, and specifically the south central region, recently has seen activity resembling a ramp up to similar measures.

At the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference in March, an advocacy group called Defend My Privacy, affiliated with the Pennsylvania Family Institute, staffed a booth, and posts a web site, which advocates say peddles misinformation about transgender people and Pennsylvania's Fairness Act. Presidential candidates Ted Cruz and John Kasich addressed the Republican leadership gathering.

Languishing in the legislature, the PA Fairness Act amends the state's Human Relations Act so that sexual orientation and gender identity and expression cannot be

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2016 Central PA Pride Something for Everyone

By Brad Martin, Pres. Central PA Pride Festival

Crystal Waters, 2016 Headliner

"This year our entertainment offers something for everyone," says Brad Martin, Central PA Pride Festival president.

Headliner Crystal Waters is from Philadelphia. Pop/R&B/Hip-Hop artist Anthony Bruno relocated to York from New York City. Rising Latin star Lamberto Otto Bautista was born in Mexico City, Mexico and now also lives in York.

"We're especially lucky to have Philadelphia-born Crystal Waters as our headliner," Martin says. Lots of people don't realize "Waters is the daughter

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YOUNGER/OLDER
MIXING IT UP
"The Internet is no place to learn about sex."
Will Nace
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"I want to learn how to talk to younger gay men about HIV..."
John Folby
68

BY FRANK PIZZOLI

(L to R) Louie Marven, Carla Christopher, Samantha Ligget, Stewart Bender, Marla Cattermole, Julie Labur, Will Nace, Mary Merriman, John Folby, TL Ward, Larry Wilson

"I won't refrain from talking about anything because you are too young, if you won't because I'm too old." US Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. once said that to a young person.

Holmes sentiment filled the room on March 5 when 11 individuals gathered for a relaxed discussion organized by *Central Voice* and the LGBT Community Center.

Age 26 to 68, participants responded to an email sent to about 4,000 people asking them to join a discussion: What can you learn from and teach those who are older and younger than you?

John Folby, 68, jumped right in to start the discussion.

"I want to learn how to talk to younger gay men about HIV without them making me feel like a dirty old man. Like I want to seduce them. I don't," he said. Folby worked for decades with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on HIV issues. Thousands of individuals are alive today due to his efforts during the AIDS epidemic's first wave.

Why does Folby care?

University of Pittsburgh's Ronald Stall, Ph.D., told *Central Voice* that the HIV infection rate among US men who have sex with men is 2.4 percent. "That's high," Stall warns. That means if nothing changes 40% of gay men by the age of 40 will be infected. If the current trend continues, Stall's data shows that 50% of African-American men who turned 18 in 2009, and who have sex with men, will be HIV-positive by age 35.

Folby found it helpful when a longtime colleague

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The Wood's Edge
Green Burial

PAXTANG CEMETERY
ESTABLISHED 1898

We, at Paxtang Cemetery encourage others to think about going with native plants when planning their flower beds this spring. There are many reasons for an individual to go for native plants instead of exotic one. First of all, plants which were in Harrisburg before the Europeans arrived evolved here & are precisely adapt to Pennsylvania's climate & soil. This means you won't have to do much for them to grow into beautiful, healthy plants. Another good argument for growing natives is it preserves the region's rich biodiversity. There are many beautiful species which are native to Harrisburg & it's important to protect them. Exotic plants, on the other h&, often spread in an unpredictable fashion, creating an imbalance in the ecosystem. Here are some great natives to try this spring.

Turtlehead

Turtlehead is also known as shellflower, snakemouth, cod head & balmony. It's name comes from the fact its flower resembles the head of a turtle. This native pale-pink wildflower is a beautiful perennial & requires very little maintenance to keep - especially here in the area where it's adapted to live. Turtleheads have a mature height of up to three feet & a spread of one foot. If you can, plant them in a moist region, although they can grow in dry soil too. Make sure it has a soil pH that's neutral & either in part shade or full sun.

Columbine

Columbine is a very short-lived plant. It only lasts for two to three years. However, it self-seeds prolifically enough to persist in your garden. Its unique bell-shaped, spurred flowers can be of a variety of colors from light pastels to bright yellow, red or purple. It blooms somewhere from mid-spring to the beginning of the summer. This plants grow best in fertile, well-drained soil & full sun or partial shade. Plant them in spring, spacing them about 2 feet apart. Columbine is prone to powdery mildew so if they get the disease, cut back the affected parts as much as necessary & provide them with afternoon sunshine & air circulation.

Butterfly Weed

With its long bloom time & beautiful orange flowers, butterfly weed is a great perennial to have in your garden. It can grow from one to three feet tall & two to three feet wide. If started early, the plant can bloom late in the first year. The plant gets its name from the fact that it attracts butterflies. Monarchs often lay eggs on them, which seldom harms them. Although it's called butterfly weed, it also attracts other small animals such as hummingbirds, as well as bees & other types of insects. Make sure not to overwater your butterfly weed since it does better in a dry environment & in a area which is exposed to full sun.

Beardtongue Also known as penstemons, these herbaceous perennials are an excellent native choice. They have spikes of tubular flowers & lance shaped foliage. When planting beardtongues, make sure they aren't too close to other plants. They don't do well in competition with other species. Most beardtongues are 1 – 3 feet tall, but some varieties can reach up to six feet of height. They can have various different colors, too, such as red, pink, white & purple or in rare cases, yellow. Penstemons do best in full sun & in soil that drains well.

With so many reasons to grow native plants in your garden, & so many beautiful, low maintenance species to choose from, it's easy to make a good choice for the area's environment & ecosystem. Follow the advice above & you'll soon have a breathtaking sustainable garden with plants that belong there. **Come join us on June 25 for our Native Garden Show at 10AM**, where gardeners are invited to demonstrate & compete for the best Native Garden. If you would like **to apply to be one of these competitors** please contact our office at (717)564-2110. There will also be speakers, pruning classes, vendors & more.

~Jonathan Leger is a member of the Garden Writer's Association & a gardening enthusiast. Check out his website where he shares his passion.
"http://www.uniqueplants.net

Political Updates

INTERNATIONAL

• Gay "Cures" Don't Work Psychiatrists Say

The World Psychiatric Association has condemned so-called conversion therapy and called on governments around the world to decriminalize homosexuality reports Patrick Strudwick, *BuzzFeed* LGBT Editor, UK. The largest international organization for psychiatrists published a statement condemning conversion therapy as unscientific, unethical, ineffective, and harmful. The WPA also calls on governments around the world to scrap laws against homosexuality.

• Italy: Majority Reaches Civil Unions Deal

The Italian Senate signed off on legislation creating a civil union status for same-sex couples after a bitter debate that dominated Italian politics for months. The vote was 173 in favor and 71 against, Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* reported.If the legislation is adopted in its current form, it will not be an end to the fight over same-sex couples' rights.

• Russia: Treating Homosexuality & Pedophilia

With a mandate that facilities would have "at least one dildo" among their tools, the Russian Ministry of Health is proposing new regulations that would mandate the creation of dedicated exam rooms throughout the country for the treatment of what it calls "non-traditional sexual relationships," including homosexuality and pedophilia. The draft regulations would require "sexology exam rooms" in psychiatric hospitals and primary care clinics where clinicians would counsel "patients with conditions related to gender identification problems… sexual disharmonies and deviations." They would also be able to diagnose and treat "sexual deviations among children and youth" and "consult youth about their sexual education and knowledge of gender."

• Indonesian School for Trans Women Closed

A Muslim academy for transgender women that made headlines in the U.S. and Europe since opening in 2008 was closed by officials in Indonesia's Yogyakarta region following protests by an organization calling itself the Islamic Jihad Front reports J. Lester Feder, *News World* Correspondent. The closing is the latest development in an uproar over LGBT rights that began in January and which has caught the country's LGBT activists by surprise.

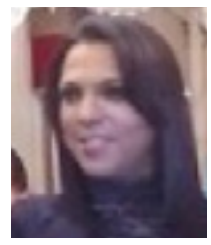
• Bomb Threat, Protesters Disrupt Festival

Protesters threw stones outside a hotel in Lviv, Ukraine where an LGBT festival was taking place. Then a bomb threat prompted the festival's cancellation. Olena Shevchenko of Insight, a Ukrainian LGBT advocacy group that organized the Equality Festival Lviv, told the *Washington Blade* that authorities evacuated the hotel in which the event was taking place. More than 50 people were attending the festival inside a conference room at the time of the evacuation.

• Calls for "Homosexuals" to be "Put To Death"

Indonesia's former Information and Communications Minister Tifatul Sembering, tweeted, "A saying of the Prophet [Mohamed]: Whomever you find committing the acts of the community of Lot (homosexual) should be put to death." Sembering is now a member of Parliament from the Islamist Prosperous Justice Party.

• Trans Woman Sworn in as Council Member



Trans woman José Luis Suárez Araujo was sworn in as a member of the City Council of Guanajuato, capital of Mexico's Guanajuato state. It was a first for the state. She fills the seat of a council member who has taken a mandatory leave of absence as he faces criminal charges of domestic violence against an ex-partner.

• Marriage Initiative Has 2 Million Signatures

Romania's Coalition for Family has reportedly gathered more than 2 million signatures supporting an initiative to enshrine an exclusively man-woman definition of marriage in the Romanian constitution. The initiative was launched by Orthodox Metropolitan of Banat Ioan Selejan at the end of his Christmas mass, and Orthodox priests are among those who have been urging people to sign.

• Egyptian Doctor Sentenced To Jail

Last February a doctor was sentenced to a year in jail after someone reported him to "morality police." A special section of Egyptian law enforcement monitors so-called "moral crimes" in the country. Typically targeting homosexual men and transgender people, this police unit increasingly monitors social media platforms to secure arrests.

• Indonesia Pushes Back on Anti-LGBT Efforts

Indonesia is facing a wave of anti-LGBT rhetoric and actions by government officials and Muslim religious leaders. A commentary by author Intan Paramaditha in the *Jakarta Post* says the situation "reflects the fear of the dissolution of hetero-normative values and national morality, which, since the Reform Era, have been embedded within a conservative interpretation of religion."

• Muslims Against Homophobia to March

Muslims Against Homophobia Australia marched in this year's Gay and Lesbian Mardis Gras Parade in Sydney. The group was founded in 2011 by Alice Aslan to "promote the rights of LGBTI people as well as stand in solidarity with them. There's a lot of homophobia in the Muslim community that's widespread and I wanted to challenge that," Aslan said.

• Swiss Voters Reject Marriage Amendment

Voters rejected by a very narrow margin a constitutional amendment that would have enshrined a man-woman definition of marriage into the country's constitution under the guise of a measure on taxation. The initiative was backed by the Christian Democratic People's Party. "This initiative was anti-LGBTI sentiment masquerading as tax reform," said Joyce Hamilton, co-chair of ILGA-Europe's Executive Board. "The Swiss public saw through the proposal and said they didn't want to be part of it."

• Maltese PM Pushs Marriage Equality

Prime Minister Joseph Muscat announced that he is favor of marriage equality and said his government would provide "strong leadership" to push it forward. The country has civil unions and progressive laws on gender. Pink News reports that Muscat is also moving to outlaw therapy to 'cure' gay people. "I will defend the Church's right to express its position," he said, "but I'm also free to say that this government will keep moving forward with its plans."

• Petition Urges Removal of Gay Ambassador

A petition that has been posted to the White House website urges President Obama to remove gay U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic James "Wally" Brewster from his post. The petition — posted by "anonymous" - accuses Brewster of promoting "an LGBT agenda inconsistent with the Christian cultural values and tradition of the Dominican Republic." The post criticizes Brewster and his husband, Bob Satawake, for visiting a school. The petition also notes the two men "supported" last week's official launch of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce's latest international affiliate in the Dominican Republic. The petition says the U.S. Agency for International Development is "also supporting LGBT activities with their current budget. Though we have proved to be a tolerant country, we deem this agenda disrespectful to the culture and traditions of most Dominican families," it reads.The petition currently has 15,949 signatures. It needs an additional 84,051 signatures by April 7 in order to prompt the White House to respond.

NATIONAL

• Pledges to Out Closeted Republicans

Texas GOP Chair-elect Robert Morrow said,"I just love exposing these sexual hypocrits in the Republic Party, especially the closeted homosexuals." He has vowed to out Republican politicians who portray themselves as Christian conservatives but are in fact closeted homosexuals.

• Kentucky Passes Bill That Limiting Protections

The Kentucky State Senate voted 22 to 16 to approve a bill that would protect people who refuse services in the name of religion in certain situations, and override local laws designed to protect LGBT people from discrimination. Republican Senator Albert Robinson said the bill aims to protect individuals who want to refuse services to same-sex couples — such as wedding cakes.

• Greg Louganis Gets His Wheaties Box

A petition to put Louganis on the box drew more than 40,000 signatures. Eight months after a documentary about the diver inspired an online petition asking that he be belatedly featured on the cover of a Wheaties box, the cereal's maker is announcing that it will do just that.

• North Carolina: No one mourns the wicked.

Tony Award-winning composer and lyricist Stephen Schwartz who has written such hit musicals as *Godspell* (1971), *Pippin* (1972) and *Wicked* (2003) is refusing to allow any of his musical productions to be put on in North Carolina because of its recently passed anti-LGBT law HB2 and is asking all other Broadway composers and agencies to do the same.

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voice box

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A reader

LEGAL EXPENSES

Q: Should elected officials or non-elected officials appointed to serve on public governing bodies be held personally liable for legal expenses if convicted of a crime while performing their official duties?
A: Yes. They need to be held liable. Campaign contributions should not be "allowed" to be used to cover legal expenses!

Bill Krenz

E-mail your thoughts to posops@aol.com

publisher's voice

Never discuss politics or religion?

Frank Pizzoli

There's an old saying: Never discuss politics or religion in social settings.

The saying derives from the notion that in America, when we gather in the public square, we do so to craft solutions for the good of the village. In order to achieve that goal, we must all put aside, as the saying says – politics and religion.

Inherent in the approach are outcomes in which no one gets everything they want. After all, that's the American Way. How else do we think our Founders came to closure on The Declaration of Independence or the US Constitution?

When experience showed that the Constitution as written it didn't work out under its original language, prudence (the ability to act maturely, not the popular Drag Queen), prevailed. The Constitution was amended. After we decided to end the grossly inhuman practice of slavery, we all came together in the public square to enact the Equal Protection Clause as part of the 14th Amendment to our Constitution.

The clause took effect in 1868 and provides that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction «the equal protection of the laws». A primary motivation for this clause was to validate the equality provisions contained in the Civil Rights Act of 1869, which guaranteed that all people would have rights equal to those of all citizens.

Even that lofty goal had to be further strengthened with the 1964 Federal Civil Rights Act.

Why?

Because many descendants of those who were in the public square back in 1868 deviously circumvented the amendment's intention. That's how we got the Jim Crow South from folks who invented ways to not allow equal protection under the law for African Americans – poll taxes, literacy tests, laws outlawing teaching saves to read.

In other words, the system was rigged against the solution of equal protection under the law cobbled together under The American Way – no discussing politics or religion when crafting public policy that reflects the best for all. And the best for all means no group or individual gets all they want. That's what makes the policy so good.

The time has come again to revisit the quaint notion that no one gets all they want. No group or individual gets a public policy or law that reflects only their belief. Such is the case with the recent spate of anti-LGBT laws in states that just cannot accept that the US Supreme Court has ruled, under the 14 Amendment, that in order for same-sex marriage to be treated with equal protection under the law, it will be treated as legal. That's the law of the land.

Bitter that they lost the marriage battle – meaning didn't have their personal or organizational belief system was not made the law of the land – religious groups and Conservative political lobbies have attacked the basic LGBT civil rights protections passed by municipalities and states.

Republican Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed into law a bill that protects people, religious organizations, and certain businesses that refuse services specifically to LGBT people. The law also protects those opposed to recognizing the gender identity of transgender people.

South Carolina Republican State Senator Lee Bright has introduced a bill with anti-trans and LGBT language.

Tennessee's House of Representatives has passed a bill allowing therapists who believe homosexuality is the mark of Satan to refuse to treat gay clients.

Mississippi has enacted a law that allows businesses to deny services to gay couples out of religious principle.

Florida's Department of Children and Families is reconsidering new affirmative rules based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

North Carolina passed a law that bars any city from implementing gay civil rights protection ordinances. The law also requires transgender individuals to use public restrooms consistent with the gender listed on their birth certificate.

Responding to North Carolina's law, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf immediately leaned on state lawmakers to pass the stalled PA Fairness Act. Meanwhile he signed two executive orders protecting state employees and requiring businesses wo self-centered, ho contract with the state to follow suit.

Central Voice's recommendation to those self-centered, narcissistic opponents who regularly lie about transsexuals and LGB taxpayers in their campaigns:

· If you think homosexuality is wrong, then don't be a homosexual. It doesn't sound like a good idea for you.

· Same goes for being a lesbian, bisexual, or transgender

· If you think same-sex marriage is wrong, don't marry someone of the same sex.

· Don't lie about LGBT taxpayers. Even though you're working for Jesus, according to what we read in your Bible, He wouldn't like that approach. Allowing transgender taxpayers to use the bathroom reflecting their gender expression will not expose women and children to predators, and you know that but chose to cut moral corners and lie anyway. That's being a weasel, isn't it?

· When you enter the marketplace in America, you do not get to choose your customers. That's the way it works. Always has. Always will. Unless you get your point of view legislated.

· Try to remember that in America we don't legislate according to one or another religious belief system. We don't have an American Taliban. We're certain most Americans don't want one either.

Time to turn inward. Reflect. Decide how you want to live your life, not ours, or anyone else's. Remember – equal protection under the law and that includes you too.

Chris Cormier: A Letter to Gay White Men

What's the difference between a gay white man and a white man?

No, this is not the start of a joke recently told by Donald Trump. It's a question I've been wrestling with lately as we continue to make gains in legal equality and social acceptance within the United States.

What will it be like as the "gay" part of "gay white men" gets waived into a new state of normalcy? What will it be like to just be white men — not gay white men?

Of course, each of us has our own unique lived experience and journey, and our gay identity wouldn't disappear, nor would our challenges. To borrow a phrase from Michelle Alexander: like racism, heterosexism is highly adaptable. Gay kids continue to be bullied at school and kicked out of their homes. Gay seniors get forced back into the closet at nursing homes. Gay white men remain the largest group of those living with HIV in the U.S, even as black men account for a higher proportion of new HIV diagnoses.

We are fighting back against so-called "religious freedom restoration acts," we are lobbying Congress to pass the Equality Act, and many of us continue to face economic hardship and discrimination when seeking employment or housing. And yet, it feels like we're at a formative moment in the identity of gay white men in America.

My fiancé and I (he's white too) have set our wedding date in the fall. Once that ring is placed onto my left hand, I'm officially welcomed into an elite class. Married. White. Man. I stand with my husband at U.S. customs and we collectively have nothing to declare. I slide the mortgage papers along the table for my husband to sign as we buy our first home together. I tell the hotel clerk that my husband will be arriving after me and she asks for his name without pause.

But we can't ignore the fact that alongside the headlines featuring gains in lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) equality are those accounting racial injustice and the widening gap between rich and poor.

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Mixing It Up

Continued from page 1

plained that to a younger gay man his words on HIV are "like the Peanuts cartoon - wha, wha, wha". The words go unheard. He wants to move beyond that dynamic to have "honest talk on sexual issues".

Kitchen sink

"Everything." That's what Larry Wilson, 65, who once owned popular gay bars in Harrisburg, said next.

"It's important that we learn from young folks what they go through coming out in today's world," he stressed. "No matter our age, each of us needs to keep an open mind."

"Nostalgia isn't what it used to be" said baseball icon Yogi Berra. And that was Wilson's point. "Every generation's past is important" Wilson underscored, but change is non-stop.

"Coming out for my generation often meant lots of trauma," Wilson said. "I'd like to know what coming out is like today, Is there trauma? I want to describe what coming out meant in the past" so we can shape a shared history around LGBT struggles. Wilson's observations reflect the yarn - Today's activists stand on the shoulders of the previous generation's leaders. Today's starting point was yesterday's long fought victory.

Carla Christopher, 37, York's Equality Fest's lead organizer - this year's theme is

Stop the Violence! A call to end violence against LGBT Americans, people of color and women and girls, calls herself a "cusp gay" who learned her vocabulary "from lesbians who lived different lives than we do now," she says.

"I've known people older than me who compartmentalized their lives in order to feel safe," Christopher says. By that she means their romantic and sexual lives were kept separate from family, church, and job.

Why keep life neat and orderly?

Pennsylvania has no basic civil rights protections for LGBT individuals. Passage of the Pennsylvania Fairness Act by the state legislature would add protections to the Human Relations Act.

In activist and academic terms what Christopher describes is called the "hetero-normative environment". That's a dollar word meaning gay people live in a predominantly straight world (and always will). And although the Western world has moved towards greater assimilation - marriage equality and acceptance within the Armed Forces - "that's not true everywhere for all people, here or in other countries," Christopher points out. Thus her theme for 2016 York Equality Fest, *Stop the Violence!*

Still queer?

There is a healthy discussion in gayland focusing on the fact that not all sexual minorities within our growing alphabet soup want to reflect the larger hetero-normative culture by getting married and joining the Armed Forces.

"I know younger people have not had to compartmentalized their lives. And that's good but obviously our experiences as queer people are different," Christopher observes. Thus the reason *Central Voice* and the center organized a discussion. There is no "homogenized" gay experience. There never was, never will be. There is no "homogenized" human experience.

Christopher's partner, TL Waid, 40, lamented that the gay community does not, in contrast to generations ago, have much activity that is "organic". Assimilation has spawned organizations, boards, bylaws and budgets - stratifications into segregated groups that may not reflect the rainbow's rich diversity. An *Advocate* poll last year indicated, especially gay men, felt previous generations had a stronger sense of community.

"I came out at 14, the same year Matthew Sheppard was murdered," artist Stewart Bender, 29, said. (See p. 19 for a review of his work). "I had gay uncles and knew couples who were together a long time," explains Bender, who feels lucky to have had those examples. "But not everyone has my experience."

~26 to 68 - We are Family.~
1. WHAT CAN EACH OF US LEARN FROM SOMEONE YOUNGER?
2. WHAT CAN EACH OF US LEARN FROM SOMEONE OLDER?
3. WHAT'S THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE TO ME?
HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT!
READERS: SEND YOUR HOMEWORK ANSWERS TO posops@aol.com
CONCEPT: FRANK PIZZOLI
EIFFHART

Although Bender knew other gay men growing up, his life has not been without its challenges. "I'm sober three and a half years," he shares. And even with recent marriage victories at the more granular levels of daily life "young people are still growing, learning, and may not be in supportive environments," he says.

For every school with a Gay/Straight Alliance, there are many without that sustaining resource. In Franklin County, Tennessee, school board members are considering eliminating all extracurricular clubs hoping to get rid of a newly formed GSA. Parents have compared the group to ISIS. Students have vandalized the club's posters. Last month, anti-LGBT residents who spoke at a school board meeting warned that the GSA is part of a "radical gay political agenda" that seeks to recruit children.

Bender's boyfriend, Will Nace, 29, was an adult when he separated from a devoutly Christian family in which he was home schooled. "I wasn't in public settings with men until I was 20 - and it blew my doors off!" he said.

Nace was not prepared. "My father gave me two books on sex that hardly mentioned sex," Nace said. Then his father asked him if I had any questions. "About what? Nace thought.

Sexual health educator Samantha Liggett, 26, laughed knowingly at Nace's story.

"I had a religious father too," she said and at age 19 when she first heard the term "dental dam" she wondered "what could that be?" The group agreed generally that parents who object to sex education in school, arguing that it belongs in the home, don't provide that education at home for straight or gay children. "The Internet is no place to learn about sex," Nace concluded.

Christian minister Mary Merriman, 66, noted the importance of "context," meaning different generations should work to understand how the world looked to those older as they lived gay lives. Like Wilson's suggestion to compare "coming out" stories and how younger generations live on a daily basis in a time of growing assimilation.

Julie Lobur, 61, and Marla Cattermole, 57, one of 27 couples who participated in the historic lawsuit overturning Pennsylvania's ban on same-sex marriage have seen life through many different decades of gay experience. "It's starting to happen, institutions are aligning their policies to reflect the existence of same-sex couples," Cattermole notes. "What was strictly personal is now moving public. Assimilation is empowering," she says.

Forward

"I was mesmerized by the amazing people and stories," Lobur wrote in a follow-up email. She'd like to "wave a magic wand to get our community more involved. With so many things going our way, it's easy to be complacent. But we still have a long road ahead of us, and our hard-won gains can quickly wither away without proper care and feeding."

"I really enjoyed the discussion," Liggett said. "I didn't speak up as much as others, but I was listening and learning," she said. "If there are more discussions in the future, I would love to participate."

Pressing Issues

A March 5 discussion group organized by *Central Voice* and the LGBT Community Center addressed:

What's the most important issue facing the LGBT community?

1. Passage of The PA Fairness Act is on every participant's list.

2. Mandate that all schools include LGBT education in their curricula.

3. Like the Americans for Disability Act (although being LGBT is not a disability), passage of an American LGBT Act that requires all institutions and businesses to have LGBT-friendly policies.

4. The need to bring back "organic" gay settings now that "organizational" settings are so common.

5. Share and understand the changing vocabulary and labels around human sexuality.

Political Updates *Continued from page 3*

• Mississippi Adoption Ban Unconstitutional

The Supreme Court "foreclosed litigation over laws interfering with the right to marry and 'rights and responsibilities intertwined with marriage,'" a federal judge has ruled, halting enforcement of the state's ban on same-sex couples adopting children. Citing the U.S. Supreme Court's 2015 decision ending bans on same-sex couples' marriages, U.S. District Court Judge Daniel P. Jordan III granted a preliminary injunction against the state's Department of Human Services in a case filed this past August.

• Students Display Anti-gay Stickers

Students who placed anti-gay stickers on their identification badges at Shadow Hills High School have the right to wear the symbols, just as others can sport insignia supporting gay rights, administrators said. Both symbols are allowed as a matter of free speech, as long as they do not cause a disruption administrators said in a statement emailed to staff. *CBS* Los Angeles reported that the stickers show a rainbow - the symbol of the gay community - with a line crossing through it. Administrators warned that students cannot interrupt class to express their beliefs.

• Tennessee Freemasons Ban Gay Members

Bil Browning reports in *LGBT Nation* that Tennessee Freemasons have voted to ban on gay members. It is one of two chapters in the nation that refuse to allow gay men to join the fraternal organization. Last year, the Tennessee chapter suspended two men who married following the Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex marriage. As members started leaving the organization after the men were sanctioned, the group opted to vote on their ban. Younger members, in particular, are upset by the decision, says Chase Geiser, 25, a member from Nashville. "I'm not gay myself, but I have friends who are, and I don't think this is right; and it is something that will prevent younger members from joining the organization that has seen decreasing numbers since World War II," he said. "The older masons have very conservative Christian values. The younger masons are theistic. We believe in a creator, but we don't have a problem with homosexual marriage."

• No Same-sex Weddings Wanted

Rocking L Ranch, a picturesque, working horse ranch located in Cocoa, has turned away at least two same-sex couples who were interested in the venue for their weddings. Not only does Susan Landfried, the owner of Rocking L Ranch, discriminate against same-sex couples, but in both cases she further antagonized the women, sending emails lecturing about her Christian beliefs and why she refused to marry them.

• Tennessee Officials Weigh Eliminating Clubs

School board members in Franklin County, Tennessee, are considering the elimination of all extracurricular clubs hoping to get rid of a newly formed Gay-Straight Alliance. Franklin County High School's GSA has been under attack since it first met in January. Parents have compared the group to ISIS. Students have vandalizing the club's posters and have worn "Straight Pride" signs in protest. Last month, anti-LGBT residents who spoke at a school board meeting warned that the GSA is part of a "radical gay political agenda" that seeks to recruit children.

• W.Virginia Rejects Religious Exemption

West Virginia's state Senate overwhelmingly voted to reject HB 4012, which would have codified discrimination by allowing any business or individual to cite their religious beliefs as an excuse for denying services to other West Virginians. The bill was strongly opposed by LGBT organizations, led by Fairness West Virginia, women's groups, and by other religious minorities. Over the past several weeks, an unprecedented number of businesses in West Virginia have taken a stand against anti-LGBT discrimination.

• Puerto Rico's Marriage Ban Remains Valid

Because Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory, the US Supreme Court's ruling on same-sex couples' marriage rights does not automatically apply there, U.S. District Court Judge Juan Pérez-Giménez has ruled. The judge had previously upheld the marriage ban in Puerto Rico in October 2014, before the US. Supreme Court struck down marriage bans nationwide in Obergefell v. Hodges. After the Supreme Court's ruling in Obergefell, both the plaintiffs and territory's defendants agreed that the ban was now unconstitutional. After working through the court system and without any further briefing on the matter, Pérez-Giménez denied the request that the marriage ban remain unconstitutional. The law remains valid.

Letter to Gay White Men *continued from page 4*

Our community has learned so much, and there's a common struggle we share with those marching in the streets for dignity and justice. As we continue to fight new and old battles — all the while becoming more equal under the law and in our lived experience with our white straight brothers — we are faced with a new choice: What do we do with the lessons we've learned, the resources we've built, the privilege we've been given, and the access we have to power?

In September, President Obama reminded us of the duty we have to be champions for justice:

"Harvey Milk once said, 'If a gay person makes it, the doors are open to everyone.' But to those of us who've made it through those doors, we've got a unique obligation to reach back and make sure other people can make it through those doors, too. We have a responsibility to stand up to bigotry — not just against us, but against anybody, anywhere. We have a responsibility to stand up for freedom — not just our own freedom, but for everybody's freedom... because we remember what silence felt like when hatred was directed at us, and we've got to be champions on behalf of justice for everybody, not just our own."

I think of the skills of those who learned to lobby and write op-eds and talk with their friends and neighbors about equality for LGBTQ people. I think of the millions of dollars we collectively raised and poured into winning the freedom to marry. I think of the mayors and governors and elected leaders around the country with whom we've built relationships. I think of the courage and strength it took to say the words "I'm gay" for the first time.

What if we took all of that and threw it at our world's greatest challenges? Standing shoulder to shoulder with the Black Lives Matter organizers as we collectively demand justice and systemic reform. Lobbying our elected leaders to protect transgender people from discrimination and violence. Marching with the DREAMers as we fight for immigration reform. All while acknowledging our allies and the debt of gratitude we owe to Julian Bond and Dolores Huerta, Jeanne Manford and Zach Wahls, the St. Vincent's nurses and Unitarian ministers, and all those who made our struggle their own.

There was a time in your life when no one stood up for you. We now have a choice to make about what is expected of us. Ten years from now, a gay white kid will come out and may never know any form of discrimination based on his sexual orientation. As he forms his identity, will he expect himself to have a responsibility to stand up to bigotry and fight for freedom for all?

I look to leaders like Freedom to Marry founder Evan Wolfson, who recently became a visiting professor at Georgetown Law to share the lessons learned from the successful marriage campaign with other organizations, causes and countries. He's using what he learned after decades of fighting for marriage equality to help advance global human rights and address domestic issues like immigration, voting rights and education reform.

I am inspired by Charlie Rounds and his husband Mark Hiemenz, longtime marriage advocates in Minneapolis, who last year answered President Obama's challenge around My Brother's Keeper and began donating and raising funds for local groups expanding opportunities for young men and boys of color. I applaud Jon Stryker and the Arcus Foundation, which recently announced a multi-year, $20 million commitment with NoVo Foundation to advance transgender equality in the U.S. and globally. I cheer on my friend and former colleague, Rep. Jon Hoadley, who cut his teeth in LGBTQ politics and now fights for issues like gun safety, education reform and government accountability as a member of the Michigan State House. They and so many others know that the fight for equality and justice didn't end with last summer's marriage victory.

So, what's the difference between a gay white man and a white man?

That's for us to decide. I hope we don't soon forget what silence felt like when hatred was directed at us, and instead reach back through that door. In this legacy-defining moment, what choice will you make?

Dunn Appointed Probation and Parole Chairman

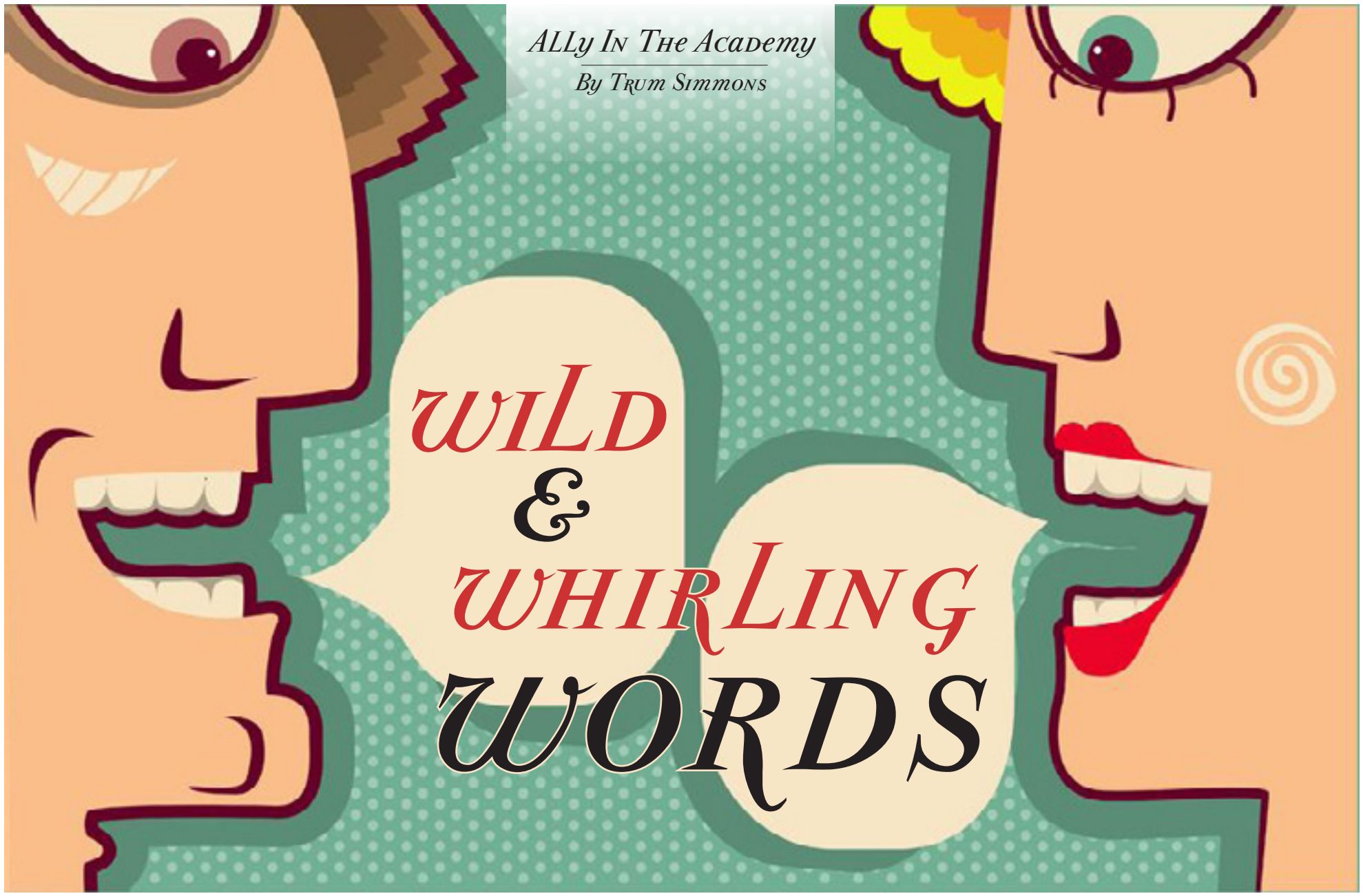
Leo Dunn, former *Central Voice* Legal Columnist, was recently appointed chair of the Pennsylvania Probation and Parole by Gov. Tom Wolf. For several years, Dunn authored a popular Legal Column for *Central Voice*. He was nominated to the state probation and parole board Oct. 19, 2015 and was confirmed by the State Senate on Dec. 9, 2015. He is the first openly gay parole board member.

"I have great confidence in Chairman Dunn's ability to serve the Commonwealth and have faith that he will provide exemplary leadership in this role," Governor Wolf said.

Dunn has served the citizens of the Commonwealth for over 26 years for two state agencies. He was appointed Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs for the Board of Probation and Parole in 2012 after working nine years as an assistant director. Prior to working for the Board, Dunn spent 15 years with the Department of Agriculture serving in various roles. He was instrumental in the original development of the PA Preferred Program.

He has served as a member of the Juvenile Act Advisory Committee, the Homeless Program Coordination Committee, the Mental Health Justice Advisory Committee at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and as chair of the LGBT Rights Committee and as a Council Member for the Solo and Small Firm Section of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. He currently serves as the Vice Chair of the Pennsylvania Bar Association's Corrections System Committee. Dunn is a Pennsylvania native.

By Trum Simmons



Wild & Whirling Words

As I suggested in my last column, now is a good time to talk about the question of why social justice advocates so often argue, and argue bitterly, with one another.

Disagreements about how to define and carry out feminist ideals have been going on at least since the 1800s in America, when women divided over how to achieve women's suffrage.

Today there is a divide between older and younger feminists over how to think about feminism in the 21st century.

Civil rights advocates also disagree about how to fight racism. Back in the day advocates were split over strategy and tactics. Was nonviolent passive resistance the way to go, or was it "by any means necessary"? Was there something else, some middle path?

And those fighting for LGBTQ equality also disagree about so many things it's hard to keep up. Bisexual folks have had to fight for recognition by gays and lesbians, and lesbians have argued among themselves about just what makes a woman a woman.

Is a transgender woman the same as any other woman? Are too many letters being added to the LGBTQ spectrum? Should there be an agreed-upon list?

It's natural that human beings committed to social justice should disagree on so much, as there is no monolithic world view held by its advocates beyond the agreement that social justice is a necessary goal. And there is no monolithic view partly because of the concept of intersectionality, a word around which some heated rhetoric has been flying of late.

The theory of intersectionality says that that the major models of oppression in society, such as that based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or class, among others, do not act independently of one another. They are all interrelated. As Harrisburg native Mara Keisling of the National Center for Transgender Equality says, we're all in this together.

Unfortunately for all of us, heated arguments overshadowed everything else that occurred at the Creating Change gathering in Chicago last year, as was detailed in the March-April *Central Voice*. When a reception was canceled because of disagreement over how to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and LGBTQ values, much shouting, pushing and shoving broke out.

And now some are blaming the infighting on intersectionality, or as it was called in a recent column in *The New York Observer*, "the latest strategy of Israel-haters who, like Alice in Lewis Carroll's classic reside in a 'looking glass world'… where language is nonsensical and everything is topsy-turvy."

Writer Ziva Dahl, describing Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) as a "rabidly ant-Israeli organization," decried JVP's linking the Palestinian issue to "the struggles of color, student survivors of sexual assault and all others who on campus fight against oppression, whether imperialism, racism, patriarchy, police violence, or other systemic inequities." She goes on to note that criticism of Israeli government policies often ends up becoming hate speech.

Do all of us interested in social justice need to see the Israeli-Palestine conflict exactly the same way? Won't our life situations and life experiences influence our beliefs? Don't we have to agree to disagree on many points without calling each other "haters"?

Language can really do us in. In another of *Through the Looking Glass*' famous passages, Humpy Dumpty says that when he uses a word it means just what he chooses it to mean.

The question is, said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things," to which Humpty answers, the "question is which is to be master—that's all."

We know today that different social groups have their own language communities in which they decide which words to use to explain their values. Someone from outside that community may question the language, but they need to understand it first. Simply trashing language they deem nonsensical is no help at all.

Years ago author Neil Postman wrote about language education. "Languaging, as I prefer to call the process, is least like a mechanical skill. It is, in fact, the most intimate, integrated, emotion-laden learning we do. …To speak new words in new ways is not a cosmetic activity. It is a way of becoming a new person. It involves learning new things and seeing the world in new ways."

Whether it's intersectionality or some other neologism, we need to give that word a good hearing before we reject it. If the alternative entails calling one another ignorant, wrong or haters, that seems to be living in a world beyond the looking glass for sure.

In Shakespeare's most famous play, *Hamlet* is not himself after seeing his father's ghost. He is not in control of his language, and an outburst by him causes Horatio to say, "These are but wild and whirling words, my lord."

Hamlet then apologizes: "I'm sorry they offend you, heartily."

Horatio responds, "There is no offense, my lord."

If Hamlet and Horatio can make amends like this, I believe we can too. And perhaps we can stay away from using those wild and whirling words in the first place.

Trum Simmons is professor emeritus of English and advisor emeritus to HACC Allies. His column "Ally In The Academy" appears regularly in Central Voice.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center Offers Tobacco Prevention

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center recently launched a tobacco prevention program to raise awareness of tobacco as an LGBT issue. The program hopes to tobacco use prevention in Northeast Pennsylvania's gay community.

The program is supported by Pennsylvania Department of Health Division of Tobacco Prevention & Control and Tobacco Free Northeast PA. Efforts include direct outreach through community events, presentations to LGBT organizations, and tobacco prevention outreach in LGBT bars through the end of June 2016.

"LGBT people smoke at rates over 50% higher than non-LGBT people and half of people who smoke die as a result. So, surely, tobacco is an important LGBT issue, and as an organization committed to reducing health disparities impacting the LGBT community, we are very excited to launch this program." said executive director Adrian Shanker.

In 2015, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center broadly administered a Comprehensive LGBT Wellness Needs Assessment, which, among other things, demonstrated a very high tobacco disparity impacting LGBT community members in the Lehigh Valley.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center provides programs and services to strengthen and support the LGBT community across the Greater Lehigh Valley. The center opened its 13,000 square foot facility in downtown Allentown on April 9. State and local elected officials, including PA Auditor General Eugene DePasquale and Lt. Governor Mike Stack through video remarks, national LGBT leaders, business leaders, community members, donors, and volunteers helped with thw official opening.

'Ex-Gay' Therapy Co-Founder's Medical License Revoked

Psychiatrist Benjamin Kaufman, MD surrendered his medical license on October 7, 2015 to the Medical Board of California Department of Consumer Affairs. He is the co-founder of the National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH), a notorious group of discredited practitioners who promote the outdated idea that homosexuality is a disease that can be cured. NARTH, which has since rebranded itself The Alliance of Therapeutic Choice and Scientific Integrity, has deliberately concealed the professional misconduct of its co-founder for six months.

"We consistently find that those who practice 'ex-gay' therapy are unethical and unscrupulous," said Truth Wins Out's Executive Director Wayne Besen. Truth Wins Out (TWO) is a non-profit organization that works to demolish the very foundation of anti-gay prejudice. "They are perpetrators of fraud and malpractice, who harm their clients in the name of helping them. Given this reality, we aren't the least bit surprised to find that Benjamin Kaufman is a charlatan who had his license revoked for 'gross negligence' and 'unprofessional conduct," Besen said.

Ironically, it wasn't his abuse of LGBT people that finally did in Dr. Kaufman. In 2008, Benjamin Kaufman was informed that one of his clients (listed as L.S. in the legal documents) was suffering from alcoholism and severe depression. According to California's medical board, Kaufman, "continued to routinely prescribe Schedule III medications and mood stabilizers to L.S. without seeing L.S. in person…Respondent's care and treatment of L.S. was an extreme departure from the standard of care by failing to adequately diagnose and manage chronic alcoholism leading to an irreversible neurological condition which resulted in the incapacitation of the patient….on September 9, 2011, L.S. fell into a coma."

After the guilty verdict, the Sacramento-based Dr. Kaufman elected to retire from medicine.

Every respected medical and mental health association in America condemns conversion therapy. This includes The American Psychological Association, The American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Psychiatric Association, and the American Medical Association.

'Ex-Gay' therapy for minors (aka reparative or conversion therapy) is prohibited in California, Illinois, New Jersey, Oregon, and the District of Colombia.

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Pride President Brad Martin Raises Funds for Cancers

By Central Voice

At the bottom of every mail sent by Brad Martin, the receiver sees: "Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart." - Eleanor Roosevelt.

Martin will leave many footsteps in many hearts.

Besides serving as president of Central PA Pride Festival since 2009, Martin is also making time raise funds for The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. He's running as a candidate in the Man & Woman of the Year campaign and is competing with several other candidates in Lancaster and York. "Together we will each put our best fundraising foot forward in honor of two courageous children, our Boy & Girl of the Year," Martin says.

"I want to support efforts to help LLS in its mission to ensure access to cures and treatments for blood cancers," Martin tells *Central Voice*.

I am competing with several other Man & Woman of the Year candidates in Lancaster/York, and together we will each put our best fundraising foot forward in honor of two courageous children, our Boy & Girl of the Year. While childhood leukemia has the highest cure rate of any blood cancer, it is also still the number one disease killer among children under the age of 20.

Martin's campaign runs until June 9 with a fundraising goal of $25,000.

Please mail your tax deductible donation (payable to The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society) with Brad Martin's name in the memo line to LLS, 2405 Park Drive, Suite 100, Harrisburg PA 17110. Or, if you prefer, donors can go to his campaign Web site to make a contribution –www.mwoy.org/pages/cpa/lancyork16/bmartin

"Your donation will prevent someone from losing a child, sibling, parent or loved one and allow LLS to continue funding life-saving research," Martin says. Make your donation go further by checking if your employer matches donations.

Martin is locally born and raised, currently resides in Palmyra. He has served on the board of The Pride Festival of Central PA for seven years, working as Board President for the past five years.

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www.AlderHealth.org

Alder Health Services is dedicated to improving the health of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in South Central Pennsylvania. The organization provides residents of the community with: • HIV/AIDS Services and Prevention Programming • Primary Medical Care • Mental Health Counseling Services • STD Screening and Treatment • HIV Testing • Community Health Education Forums and Workshops.

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OUT & ABOUT

LGBTQ PA Steering Committee Meets in Harrisburg

The LGBTQ Pennsylvania Steering Committee, under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Youth Congress, met March 19 in Harrisburg for a second strategy and planning meeting. Hosted by Alder Health Services, Steering Committee, founded by Jason Landau Goodman, maintains offices in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg. Seated: Rosemary Browne, Alder Health CEO and Landau Goodman. From left: Mike Mahler, Erie Gay News and NW PA Pride Alliance; Harry Young, Central PA Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce; Rachel Stevenson, LGBTea Dances; Shaashawn S. Dial-Snowden, The Voyce; Tara Stark, Pennsylvania Youth Congress; Deja Lynn Alvarez, Divine Light LGBTQ Wellness Center; Louie Marven, LGBT Center of Central Pennsylvania; Kelly Novakowski, NE PA Rainbow Alliance; Carla Christopher, York Equality Fest. Participating but not shown: Joanne Carroll, TransCentral PA.

Landau Goodman tells *Central Voice* in an email that "the LGBTQ Pennsylvania Steering Committee is actually an independent group, that is facilitated through PYC. The committee is not an extension of PYC, but rather a separate cohort of key community leaders working together. We are currently a collection of LGBTQ community organization executive directors and board presidents who are uniting to provide more coordination in local and regional work, as well as strengthen our statewide connections and power. So, it's not PYC-specific or youth-specific."

TranCentralPA Conference Huge Success

Up from 600 last year, 650 people attended the recent Keystone Conference held annually by TransCentralPA. Here conference participants take a break for a *Central Voice* photo.

Sanders Volunteers Bern

Sanders for President volunteers opened a midtown Harrisburg Office and a few days later held a chant rally on the corner of 3rd & Herr Sts., Midtown Harrisburg.

"Overwhelming," is how Carrie Fowler, Bernie Sanders campaign volunteer, described Harrisburg's reception of presidential candidate Bernie Sanders when she hosted a table at Broad Street Market weeks before the campaign's official office launch.

TransCentralPA Topics

By Joanne Carroll
president of TransCentralPA

Ready for the Next Challenge

The Keystone Conference is in our rearview mirror, and what an event it was! It never ceases to amaze me but we continue to grow, last year was right at 600, this year we topped out at 650.

The only way we were able to increase our numbers was by expanding several new program tracks to the Red Lion Hotel, and our growth for the future will continue with other new programming shifting from the Sheraton Harrisburg/Hershey across the street.

We were afforded the opportunity to host the Central Pennsylvania Gay/Lesbian Chamber of Commerce March Mixer in the middle of the conference, and several members said it was one of the best mixers ever. Their comments parallel that of our regular conferees who continue to pour praise on the conference.

As in any venture, it takes more than the work of one or two key people to make an event of this magnitude a success. For that, I have to thank the many members of TransCentralPA for stepping up eagerly and often as we hosted visitors from all over North America and the World.

I would be remiss if I failed to thank the management and staff of the Sheraton for eight exemplary years of gracious hospitality and outstanding customer service, and add to that our gratitude to the staff and management of the Red Lion for their contribution to our success.

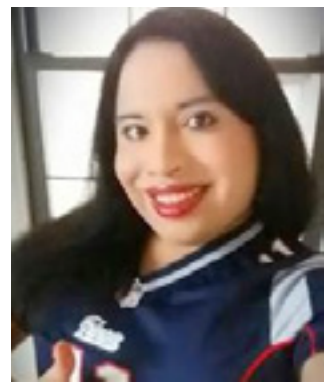
Nevertheless, we move on to the rest of our year ready to take on the challenges ahead. The biggest single challenge for all of us in the LGBT community is the passage of the PA Fairness Act. We may have marriage equality, but fat lot of good that does us, if we can be fired just for legally wedding the one we love. It is still legal to discriminate against members of our LGBT family in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and that must end.

We in the LGBT community are not seeking any greater rights than the person standing next to us at the grocery or drug store. We only want to be fully accepted members of society and it will take effort from all of us to make it happen. So, when someone from our community asks you to step up and write a letter, call a legislator, or just have a graceful conversation with a friend, relative, or acquaintance, answer the call.

In closing, as we are speaking about the PA Fairness Act, I must refer again to the Keystone Conference. For the better part of a week during the ninth through 13th of March, 650 people were able to enjoy their lives in an environment free of prejudice, bigotry and rejection. There was no judgment, (well maybe only about a hairstyle or a wardrobe choice) as everyone lived authentically and embraced one another as equals and as friends, an atmosphere we desperately need within the Commonwealth and the Nation.

Joanne Carroll is the President of TransCentral PA. TransCentral PA is committed to providing advocacy and caring support for transgender individuals, their significant others, families, friends and allies. TransCentralPA also provides gender education and information to businesses, organizations, educational institutions and governmental agencies.

White House Appoints First Transgender Person LGBT Liaison



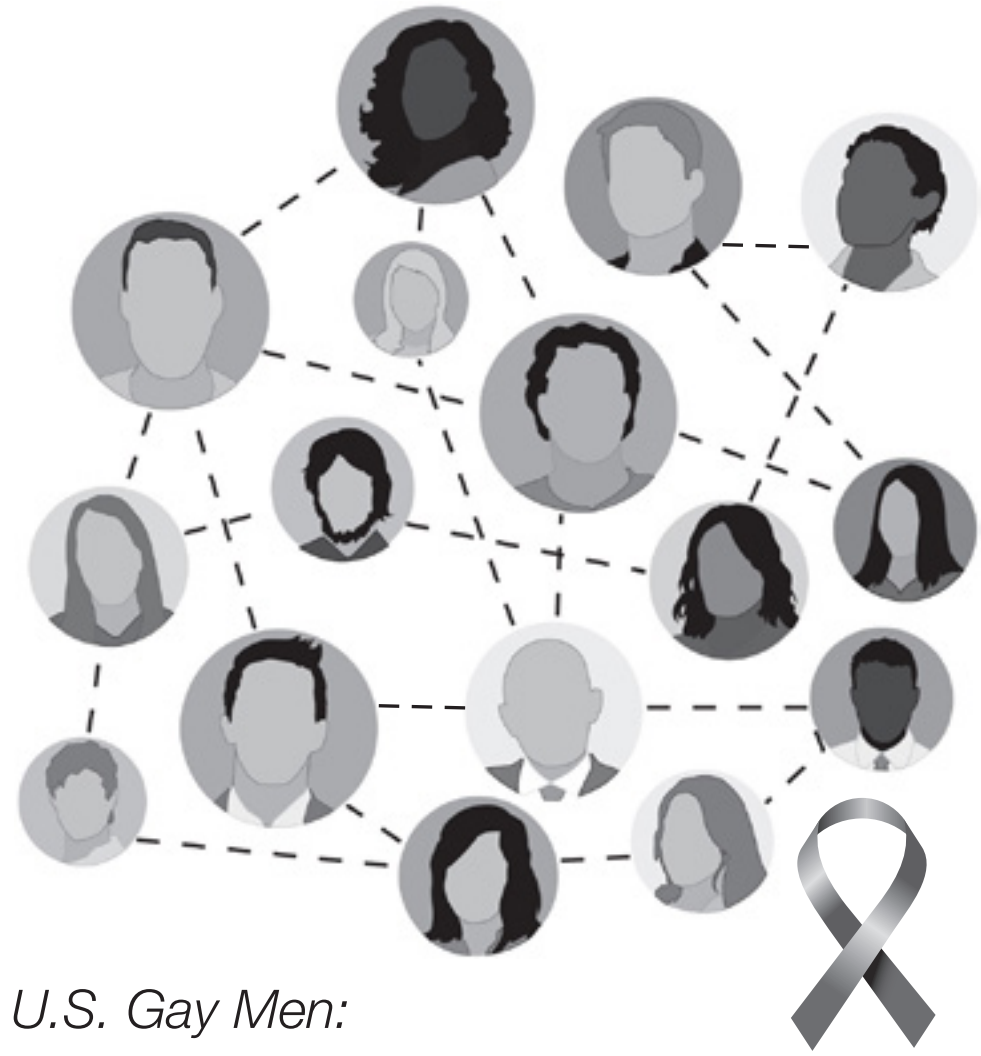
Raffi Freedman-Gurspan is now the White House's main point of contact for LGBT groups on all issues.

President Barack Obama has appointed Raffi Freedman-Gurspan as the White House's primary LGBT liaison, making her the first transgender person in the role.

"Raffi is a great choice," said Mara Kiesling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. "President Obama has said he wants his administration to look like America, and they have moved to include trans Americans. Raffi's skills and personality make her the exact right person for this important job."

Freedman-Gurspan became the first transgender staffer appointed to the White House in 2015, working as the outreach and recruitment director in the presidential personnel office.

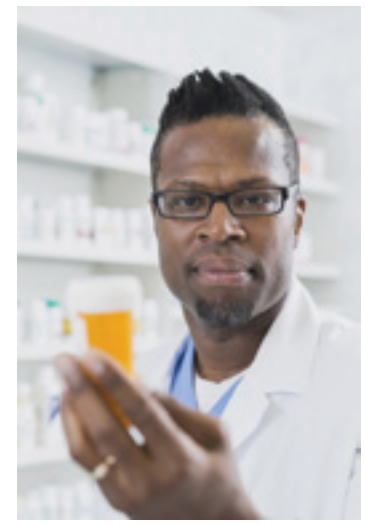
In her new role — as the Outreach & Recruitment Director for Presidential Personnel and Associate Director for Public Engagement — Freedman-Gurspan becomes the White House's lead point of contact for LGBT groups on all issues. Before joining the White House, Raffi was a policy adviser at the National Center for Transgender Equality and a legislative director in the Massachusetts House of Representatives.



U.S. Gay Men:

Half of Blacks, 1 in 4 Latinos Projected to Contract HIV

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has projected that, if current trends persist, half of black men who have sex with men and a quarter of Latino MSM will become HIV positive during their lifetimes. CDC researchers analyzed HIV diagnosis and death rates between 2009 and 2013 to conduct the first-ever projection of the lifetime risk of contracting HIV among certain populations. (All estimates assume that current diagnosis trends will endure.) The findings were presented at the 2016 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in Boston.



"As alarming as these lifetime risk estimates are, they are not a foregone conclusion. They are a call to action," Jonathan Mermin, MD, director of CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD and Tuberculosis Prevention, said in a press release. "The prevention and care strategies we have at our disposal today provide a promising outlook for future reductions of HIV infections and disparities in the U.S., but hundreds of thousands of people will be diagnosed in their lifetime if we don't scale up efforts now."

On average, Americans have a chance of 1 in 99 of contracting HIV during their lifetimes. One in six MSM are projected to contract HIV, including 1 in 2 black, 1 in 4 Latino and 1 in 11 white MSM. The lifetime risk of HIV among African Americans overall is 1 in 20 in men and 1 in 48 for women. The corresponding figures for whites are 1 in 132 for men and 1 in 880 for women. Among injection drug users, the lifetime risk is 1 in 23 for women and 1 in 36 for men.

Heterosexual women have only a 1 in 241 lifetime risk of contracting the virus, as do 1 in 473 heterosexual men.

In the hard-hit South, where residents are at higher risk of HIV compared with those in other U.S. regions, 1 in 13 people in Washington, DC, are projected to contract HIV during their lifetimes, as are 1 in 49 in Maryland, 1 in 51 in Georgia, 1 in 54 in Florida, and 1 in 56 in Louisiana. By comparison, the lifetime risk is 1 in 69 in New York, 1 in 101 in Illinois, 1 in 196 in New Mexico and 1 in 670 in North Dakota.

"These estimates are a sobering reminder that gay and bisexual men face an unacceptably high risk for HIV—and of the urgent need for action," Eugene McCray, MD, director of the CDC's Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention, said in the press release. "If we work to ensure that every American has access to the prevention tools we know work, we can avoid the outcomes projected in this study."

LGBT History Exhibit Opens

By Central Voice

April 12, over 100 people gathered at the State Museum of Pennsylvania to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities. A panel of individuals originally appointed to the council discussed their work.

The council was appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp and was the first governmental sponsored body dealing with LGBT issues in the nation.

Shapp signed an executive order on Feb. 11, 1975 that prohibited discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for state employees, making Pennsylvania first state government to do so. By Feb. 1976, the council had been appointed with included Dr. Anthony Silvestre as its first chair.

The council was created with representatives of major state government agencies and LGBT representatives from throughout Pennsylvania. They advised state government leaders on LGBT issues affecting public policy through the various agencies and "to recommend ways in which discrimination against sexual minorities can be ended," according to Shapp's executive order. The council was active through the end of Governor Dick Thornburgh's administration, after which it became inactive.

The evening also launched an exhibit "We're Here: Pioneering LGBT Rights in Pennsylvania" which marks the emergence of the equality movement for LGBT rights in the late 1960s and its progress in Pennsylvania during the 1970s.

The exhibit features photographs, documents and objects related to this pivotal moment in civil rights history and focuses on the partnership between LGBT activist coalitions and Shapp. The free exhibit is open until October 30.

Besides former first chair Silvestre, the speakers also included

Program moderator and History Project chair Barry Loveland; James Vaughan, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Louie Marven, LGBT Center of Central PA; Ted Martin, Equality PA, Jason Landau Goodman, PA Youth Congress; Dr. Rachel Levine, PA Physician General; and former council members and participants Mark Segal, publisher, Philadelphia Gay News, Sam Deetz,Terry Dellmuth, Art Duprat, Marilyn Hewitt, Mary Nancarrow, Carol Ranck and Jay Snyder.

The oral history program was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project, Equality PA, the Pennsylvania Youth Congress and the Philadelphia Gay News.event.

Looking back on history, former council chair Silvestre tells *Central Voice* that in the movement's early days, he knew activists who were "shot at, assaulted, and fired from jobs in central Pennsylvania. But our community members continued to stand up and life slowly changed.

Now, Silvestre says, "life is pretty safe and secure for those of us who are well-educated, white, and physically and mentally able." It is easy to forget, he says, that people in our community still live at risk of serious discrimination and violence. "We owe them our voice, our time and our resources," he stresses.

Silvestre does not recall having "any expectations when I joined the movement other than my need to respond to the immediate injustices that I observed."

He became active at Penn State University when the administration removed a man from his student-teacher position "because the guy had the courage to sign papers needed to begin the Homophiles of Penn State." Silvestre knew of the sodomy laws in Pennsylvania "but it was only over time that I deepened my understanding of all of the ways that people suffered because of their minority sexual orientation and gender identity issues." He began acting in support of the student teacher, although he had not personally experienced many problems related to his homosexuality.

"My church said that I would burn in hell but other than that I wasn't targeted by people around me. I kept my head low enough so I that I never experienced violence or discrimination," Silvestre says.

Becoming an activist, Silvestre met many different people, learning about "the range of terrible experiences faced by LGBT community members. While he expected sodomy laws to become undone, "I didn't expect marriages to be legalized. Perhaps that was because as a child of the 1960's sexual revolution, marriage was not something we valued. Today, Silvestre says "there is no one I value more now than my wonderful husband Michael."

Although the civil rights of some segments of the gay community have moved ahead rapidly, Silvestre notes that "Unfortunately, other segments still face serious injustice."

"Our kids in foster and group homes are still being bullied and victimized by the very people who are supposed to protect them. Many people in senior living facilities and nursing homes still need to hide in order to avoid mistreatment," he points out.

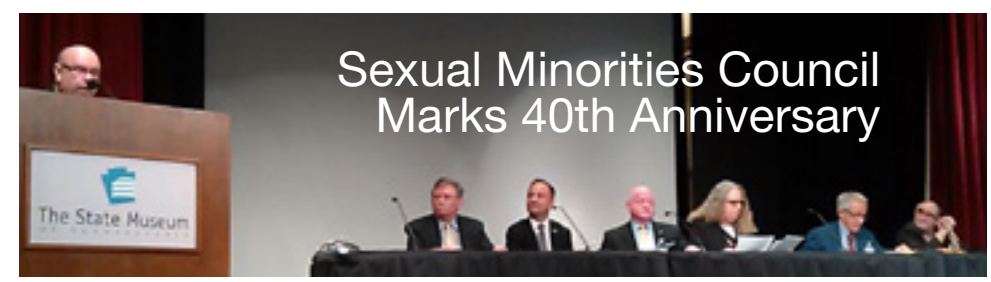
"Our teens of color are still getting infected with HIV at higher rates than any other group even in the least developed countries of the world," Silvestre says. The current term for what Silvestre refers to is "intersectionality," when one or more circumstance overlaps in the life of an individual.

Silvestre is holding out for declaring success.

"Living to see the day when every trans kid can go to school safely and with dignity and when every gay addict can be successfully treated in residential drug clinics that respect all sexuality, when every lesbian of color can get the medical care she needs, that will be the day that I will believe our movement has succeeded."

Ted Martin, Equality PA executive director, said, "40 years ago a great stride was made forward for simple fairness and

Continued on page 23



April 12 100-plus people attended a panel discussion celebrating the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Governor's Council on Sexual Minorities. The council was appointed by Pennsylvania Governor Milton Shapp and was the nation's first governmental sponsored body dealing with LGBT issues. From left: Barry Loveland, chair, LGBT Center of Central PA History Project; James Vaughn, executive director, PA Historical and Museum Commission; Louie Marven, executive director, LGBT Center of Central PA; Ted Martin, executive director, Equality PA; Dr. Rachel Levine, PA Physician General; Dr. Tony Silvestre, former council chair; Mark Segal, former council member, Phila. Gay News publisher.

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director

Sharing our histories

The LGBT Center of Central PA recently partnered with Central Voice to open up an intergenerational conversation in our local LGBT community. I was pleased that we were able to host this conversation at the center, in part because this is an interesting topic to me, and in part because it connects so well with the programming already taking place at the center for youth and seniors.

Particularly, the center's LGBT History Project is especially concerned with encouraging the LGBT community of the region to learn about its history, in part because understanding the history of the struggle for equality helps put in perspective how the movement has developed and matured and provides both a sense of accomplishment and inspiration for future efforts.

There were observations that I expected to come up in this conversation – including that younger LGBT individuals can learn about from older LGBT individuals about how our communities achieved some of the progress we enjoy today, and that older LGBT individuals can learn about current language, labels, and lingo. There were some also plenty of fantastic insights that I did not anticipate, and that I could not have anticipated.

Much of the discussion focused on the way that cultural advancement has impacted the possibilities of multi-generational LGBT communities interacting. For example, one strand of discussion was focused on the Internet. The opportunity to find commonality with others behind the perceived safety of online connection has certainly impacted our LGBT communities. These connections may offer a lifeline to someone feeling isolated, like they are "the only one."

This feeling is something that people of all ages in our discussion could relate to, and there was a generally positive feeling toward this possibility for online connection; however, sometimes using the Internet has enabled a new kind of isolation, in that it allows for the false sense that we don't need to actively participate in a broader, "in-person" community.

There are also downsides to a perceived sense of overall progress. Progress oftentimes accompanies assimilation, which has made it such that the community does not get together out of a sense of need, or a sense of survival, as may have happened in the past. In the past, intergenerational mentorship happened naturally because when someone came out, there was a community of older LGBT people there ready to share the stories, symbols, and traditions.

Overall, the discussion reminded me of the importance of listening to those who have had different life experiences than our own.

A stereotype of older LGBT individuals might be that they accuse the younger generation of not knowing the histories of our movement. While there is truth in this, our conversation led to a more nuanced understanding of how difficult it is to share history when the histories of our movement is left out of school curriculum, and when young people continue to be coming out in isolation despite our progress.

Similarly, a stereotype of younger LGBT individuals is that they don't appreciate the shoulders they stand on in the movement, and that they have no desire to better understand the movement's histories. While there is also truth in this, our conversation delved further into addressing the barriers that keep generations separated, and how we can work toward removing them. One younger participant shared a regretful feeling of having missed a cross-generational LGBT community.

As a community, we have an obligation to share our life experiences between generations, and to work toward creating spaces where these conversations can happen. No one else is going to do it for us. And more importantly, we have a responsibility to listen when stories from other generations than our own are offered.

The mission of the LGBT Center of Central PA is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, cultural, and community activities that foster wholeness. Info: (717) 920-9534; www.centralpalgbtcenter.org

COME JOIN US!

Lancaster PA PRIDE 2016

www.facebook.com/LancasterPAPride
for an up-to-date list of entertainers, vendors, and sponsors

Sunday, June 19th
Binns Park
12 PM - 6 PM
$5 Admission Fee
(children under 12 free)

Something for everyone!

This outdoor festival will feature an array of talented entertainment, varied vendor offerings from arts and crafts to Pride regalia, and a full menu of food offerings.

FESTIVAL GUIDELINES:
- Please do your part to keep the area clean and safe—pick up trash and recyclables and deposit in their proper receptacles located throughout the park
- Ignore any protesters
- Report problems quickly to Pride workers or security personnel
- No Smoking

Lancaster PRIDE is a project of the LGBT Center LGBT center

Be sure to visit the PRIDE table for raffle tickets and PRIDE information

The PRIDE Board would like to thank our talented entertainers, varied vendors, dedicated volunteers, and all of our supporters. Lancaster PA PRIDE is only possible because of you!

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Artistic Director
Jordan R. Markham

SATURDAY
MAY 21, 2016
Trindle Spring
Lutheran Church
14 State Road
Mechanicsburg, PA
Showtime: 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY
MAY 22, 2016*
York Unitarian Church
925 South George St.
York, PA
Showtime: 4:00 p.m.

*Sponsored by UUCY Music Committee

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photo provided by: Lauren Fischer

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JUNE 19 is Lancaster Pride
Friday, June 17th, 8 pm-2 am
Saturday, June 18th, 8 pm-2 am
Sunday, June 19th, 3 pm-2 am

Drink Specials
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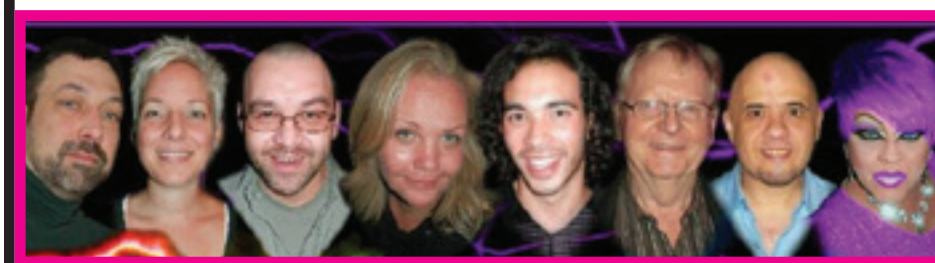
ALL WEEKEND!

OPEN DAILY 8 PM-2 AM • 365 DAYS A YEAR!



201 West Orange Street • Lancaster, PA
717.299.0661

Lancaster PA PRIDE 2016

Please join in celebrating this year's Lancaster PA Pride Festival on Sunday, June 19th, from 12:00 – 6:00 p.m. This year marks the 9th anniversary of the Lancaster PA Pride Festival and there will be some notable changes this year. This year's event is moving from Buchanan Park to Binns Park. Located in the 100 block of North Queen Street in downtown Lancaster, Binns park has the capacity to hold larger crowds and is in a convenient and accessible location for those wishing to walk to the festival.

The event is also moving from a Saturday to a Sunday this year to enable street closures in downtown Lancaster for the event. Attendance at the event has doubled in the last several years. Event organizers are hoping that these changes will allow Lancaster PA Pride to continue to grow each year.

As in past years, attendees can expect to see a full schedule of entertainment that day. The event had almost 60 vendors last year and expects to see even more vendors this year. Event vendors offer attendees everything from Pride merchandise to invaluable community resources. Lancaster PA Pride's mission is to be a family friendly and inclusive community festival. There will be activities for both children and adults this year. Event organizers also wanted to acknowledge the active participation of our area churches in Lancaster PA Pride. For the first time, this year's festival will begin with an inter-faith service.

For more information on the event visit the Lancaster PA Pride website at http://www.centralpalgbtcenter.org/lancaster-pride or the Lancaster PA Pride Facebook and Instagram pages.

Gettysburg College's
MAJESTIC
at the Jennifer and David LeVan Performing Arts Center

St. Paul
& The Broken Bones
Wednesday, July 20, 2016 @ 7:30 pm
This electrifying soul septet from Birmingham, Alabama, makes its Central PA debut with a sweat-soaked, gutbucket, horn-infused brand of Muscle Shoals / Stax–influenced R&B, fronted by Paul Janeway, one of the most charismatic lead singers since James Brown. $39, $35, $31
tickets: (717) 337-8200 or gettysburgmajestic.org
25 Carlisle Street, Gettysburg, PA

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Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster

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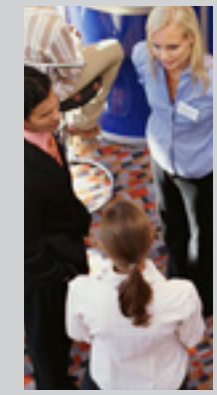
10 am Sunday Services

(717) 393-1733
538 West Chestnut Street, Lancaster, PA

LGBT Community Center Meet Ups

The LGBT Community Center has begun offering meet-up groups for LGBT Women, LGBT Men, LGBT Seniors, and LGBT Parents across the central PA region. The meet-ups are facilitated by volunteers. Volunteer leaders are committed to creating community, networking, sharing resources, learning, building substance-free social space, making sure our communities are visible, identifying outreach opportunities, and making and finding safe spaces.

LANCASTER
The Candy Factory
342 N Queen St.
Warehouse D (rear), 6-8 pm
- ***LGBT Seniors***
  1st Mondays
- ***LGBT Women***
  2nd Mondays
- ***LGBT Parents***
  3rd Mondays
- ***LGBT Men***
  4th Mondays



YORK
Heidelberg UCC
47 W Philadelphia St, 6-8 pm
- ***LGBT Parents***
  1st Wednesdays
- ***LGBT Men***
  2nd Wednesdays
- ***LGBT Seniors***
  3rd Wednesdays
- ***LGBT Women***
  4th Wednesdays

PFLAG LANCASTER

Meet Monthly
4th Friday Starting at 7 PM
Doors Open 6:45 PM
Space Granted by UUCL Located
538 W. Chestnut St. Lancaster

Support Line 717.283.4490

pflaglancaster@gmail.com
Facebook: PFLAG Lancaster II
www.pflagoflancasterpa.org
P.O. Box 4222 Lanc. PA 17604

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Could It Happen? cont'd from pg. 1

used as the basis of discrimination. Current state law allows Pennsylvanians to be fired or denied housing and services solely on the basis of being gay or transgender.

Last February a coalition of 1,000 Pennsylvania employers, academic institutions, and non-profit organizations with 150,000 employees, called on legislators to pass the act. Pennsylvania is surrounded by Northeast states which have such protections, calling into question the Keystone State's long-term economic viability given the dramatic shift by business to be inclusive as a "good for business" strategy. The coalition works with a lobbying effort known as PA Competes, which is working hand in glove with Equality PA to pass the proposed legislation.

What's going on?

After last November's bitter battle, Houston repealed its recently passed LGBT civil rights ordinance. Opponents played the "trans" card, stoking unfounded fears that such protections would lead to inappropriate sexual encounters by putting women and children in harm's way if transsexuals used bathrooms according to their expressed gender identity.

A "fear based" approach is opponents' game plan; whereas supporters of such measures cite the sensible aspects of LGBT civil rights laws – that they provide fair treatment in the marketplace regarding employment, public accommodations like hotels and goods and services. They also include the right of transsexuals to use bathrooms based on gender expression and identity.

April 5 Republican Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed into law a bill that protects people, religious organizations, and certain businesses that refuse services specifically to LGBT people. The law also protects those opposed to recognizing the gender identity of transgender people.

Next South Carolina Republican State Senator Lee Bright introduced a bill with anti-trans and LGBT language.

Then Tennessee's House of Representatives passed a bill allowing therapists who believe homosexuality is the mark of Satan to refuse to treat gay clients.

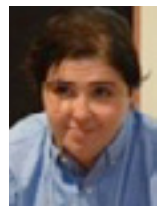
Mississippi enacted a law that allows businesses to deny services to gay couples out of religious principle.

Pressured by far-right religious groups, Florida's Department of Children and Families is reconsidering new affirmative rules based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

North Carolina passed a law that bars any city from implementing gay civil rights protection ordinances. The law also requires transgender individuals to use public restrooms consistent with the gender listed on their birth certificate.

Responding to North Carolina's law, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf immediately leaned on state lawmakers to pass the stalled PA Fairness Act.

"What North Carolina did is wrong, and equally as troubling is the Pennsylvania General Assembly's inaction on passing non-discrimination legislation...This fundamental right is essential, and enjoys broad, bipartisan support," Wolf said in a statement. He urged legislators to send a bill to his desk and meanwhile April 7 he signed executive orders providing non-discrimination protections for members of the LGBT community employed by or contracting with the state.



Maro

Gehler

Martin

Lead PA House sponsor of the PA Fairness Act, State Rep. Dan Frankel, said, "Now the legislature needs to pass the bipartisan Pennsylvania Fairness Act to put these commonsense protections against discrimination into place statewide."

Wolf is signaling that "Pennsylvania is inclusive, welcoming, and open for business for everyone. We must show that Pennsylvania is the place that William Penn envisioned when he founded our commonwealth on the principle that it is open, diverse, and inclusive for all people."

Good for business is the mantra of Hayden Maro, a veteran transgender activist and director of Trans United, a newly-formed political action committee. "It's crucial that trans people build our own political power and speak with our own voices," Maro tells *Central Voice*.

"Pennsylvanians support the bipartisan PA Fairness Act because they oppose discrimination and want a stronger, more competitive economy," Maro says. "The folks that oppose the act know that they can't win if the public conversation is based on facts so they're doing what desperate people on the wrong side of history have always done, they're making up outrageous claims about a small, vulnerable group of people - in this case, transgender Pennsylvanians," Maro explains.

Opponents, like Defend My Privacy, hope that "the public and legislators are so distracted that they will forget what this is really about: fairness and jobs. Maybe that works in North Carolina, but I believe Pennsylvania voters and legislators will see this for what it is: a desperate attempt by a small gossip of extremists trying to stop Pennsylvania and our country from moving forward," Maro says.

"Creating an inclusive workforce and supply chains will lead to economic success in Pennsylvania, and further establish our state as a premiere place to live, work, and conduct business", said Harry Young, CEO, Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce.

An inclusive workforce is what Pennsylvanians register when polled, reflecting the national trend with 17 states already banning anti-transgender discrimination in public accommodations.

The most recent Susquehanna Research Poll found that 74% of Pennsylvanians support updating the law. More than 400 small businesses signed on to support the campaign to end discrimination against gay and transgender people. Currently, 89% of Fortune 500 companies have sexual orientation non-discrimination policies; while 66% have gender identity non-discrimination policies.

In related activity underscoring an educational approach, early last month Freedom for All Americans, a national LGBT nondiscrimination campaign, launched the Transgender Freedom Project, a $1 million, multi-year initiative to build public support for transgender people and transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination protections.

The new effort hopes to thwart misleading information that flooded media outlets in recent weeks as anti-transgender bills have passed in North Carolina, Mississippi, and advanced in Missouri, and Tennessee, while anti-transgender bills narrowly escaped becoming law in Georgia and Virginia.

Sam Gehler, of Pennsylvania Competes, working to pass the Pennsylvania Fairness Act said his organization "calls on the shadow group, Defend My Privacy, to acknowledge their political agenda and put an end to the misinformation they are presenting."

The group, Gehler says, selected the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference, featuring two presidential candidates, to present inaccurate, fear-based, misinformation against the Pennsylvania Fairness Act. "The rhetoric this dark money group has brought to Pennsylvania is 100% inaccurate and destructive to the mission of ending discrimination in this state.

Ted Martin, of Equality Pennsylvania, an LGBT lobby with 60,000 members statewide, said about the Defend My Privacy/Pennsylvania Family Institute's booth activity at the Pennsylvania Leadership Conference and on-going web site activity "the anti-LGBT attacks by the Institute were leveled to spread disinformation about the Pennsylvania Fairness Act—a bill that would bring jobs to Pennsylvania and expand economic opportunity for all Pennsylvanians."

Pennsylvania families are hurting Martin notes. "We need our legislature to come together and get on with the business that really matters to people - passing a budget, passing the Pennsylvania Fairness Act to build a 21st century economy. Par for the course, Pennsylvania Family Institute and their national handlers are spending tens of thousands of dollars to gin up anti-LGBT rhetoric, create division and distraction, and put jobs and vulnerable young people at risk. So much for family values," Martin concluded.

Pennsylvanians Speak about Fairness Act

"As the owner of a small coffee shop, it's just smart business for potential customers to know that they can walk through the door, place an order and feel welcome. National groups that don't care about Pennsylvania families are using the Pennsylvania Family Institute to import their outside agenda to Pennsylvania. I am open for business, and Pennsylvania should be too. The only thing we should be interested in importing from North Carolina is new customers," said Annette Coletta, owner of Zen Den coffee shop in Doylestown.

Concerned parents who have transgender children are speaking out as well. "My daughter is only eleven years old. She's transgender, born male but for a long time has known that she identifies as female, a girl. My daughter is a gift from God. She brings smiles and joy wherever she goes and I am thankful that she was given to me to raise. She is my daughter and I will do my best to make sure she is healthy, happy, and try to make the world a better place for her to grow up in. Out of state groups don't have the right to use my daughter and our lives for political gain," said Linda Thomas from Erie, mother of an 11 year old transgender daughter.

Melissa DeStefano from Pottstown, mother of a transgender son said, "My son is transgender and I love him more than anything in the world. He's a faithful, athletic, caring kid who loves to serve others and has to be reminded to scoop out the cat box. Before my son came out as transgender, I'd never heard about transgender issues and I had a lot of questions and that's okay. We are on this journey together. Please don't let folks who don't care about our state or our children make kids like my son a political football for their real agenda like they did in North Carolina. As a registered Republican, I believe that we should keep politics out of the personal lives of our children."

"As a faith leader, I am saddened that this group would stoop to the same discriminatory tactics that are hurting hard-working people in Georgia and North Carolina, particularly members of the LGBT community and their families. Their statements are based in the desire to drum up fear and misunderstanding, but my faith tells me to treat people with fairness, respect, and love and to protect those in danger of disenfranchisement. Pennsylvania is the only state in the northeast without statewide protections for gay and transgender people and their families, it's time we update the law so that everyone is treated fairly," said the Reverend Ginny Miles, Penns Park United Methodist Church.

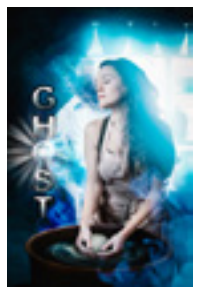
"This bill is about protecting Pennsylvanians so that everyone can have a fair chance and live a good life. The bi-partisan Fairness Act would expand protections from non-discrimination to LGBTQ people and is a common sense measure that over 70% of Pennsylvanians support. Pennsylvania is the only state in the region without this kind of law, and is long overdue for protection against discrimination for the LGBT community. We cannot allow what has happened in North Carolina to happen here in Pennsylvania," said Joanne Carroll, President of Trans Central Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Fairness Act, or HB 1510 and SB 974, are companion bills that update the Human Relations Act to include gender identity and expression and sexual orientation. The Human Relations Act, originally written in 1955, currently protects people from discrimination based on race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, national origin, disability.

Information provided by Equality PA.

COMING SOON...

GHOST, THE MUSICAL
Fulton Theatre
Until May 15



Adapted from the hit film by its Academy Award-winning screenwriter, Bruce Joel Rubin, Ghost The Musical follows Sam and Molly, a tech wizard and a gifted potter, whose connection takes a shocking turn after Sam's murder. Trapped between two worlds, Sam refuses to leave Molly when he learns she is in grave danger. He enlists storefront psychic, Oda Mae Brown, whose reluctance clashes hilariously and touchingly with his desperation. Ghost will reach into your heart and help you believe in the endless power of love.

FOOTLOOSE
Fulton Theatre
June 7 - July 17

One kid. One town. One chance... to DANCE! When Ren and his mother move from Chicago to a small farming town, Ren is prepared for the inevitable adjustment period at his new high school. What he isn't prepared for are the rigorous local edicts, including a ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher, determined to exercise the control over the town's youth that he cannot command in his own home. When the reverend's rebellious daughter sets her sights on Ren, many of the locals eagerly believe the worst about the new kid, overlooking the personal aching in both the youth and adults that fuels the need to "cut loose." Augmented with dynamic new songs for the stage musical, Footloose celebrates the wisdom of listening to young people, guiding them with a warm heart and an open mind.
Tickets: Purchased at Theatre, by calling 717-397-7425, or online.

VANYA & SONIA & MASHA & SPIKE
Sharadin Bigler Theatre
June 9 - 18

Produced on Broadway in 2013, Christopher Durang's zany comedy won both the Tony Award and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play. In this comic clash between the young and the middle-aged, the sexy and the dowdy, the successful and the stifled, playwright Durang has created a richly funny yet touching portrait of life in today's America.
Tickets: (717) 733-7966; epacboxoffice@gmail.com

LEWIS BLACK
Hershey Theatre
May 8, 7 p.m.

Lewis Black's all new show The Emperor's New Clothes: The Naked Truth will include a stop at Hershey. The Grammy Award-winning, stand-up comedian, is one of the most prolific and popular performers working today. Receiving critical acclaim, he performs more than 200 nights annually, to sold-out audiences throughout Europe, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. His live performances provide a cathartic release of anger and disillusionment for his audience. He is a passionate performer who is a more ticked-off optimist than a mean-spirited curmudgeon.
Tickets: 1-800-745-3000, HersheyTheatre.com

SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE ASBURY JUKES
Whitaker Center
May 20, 8 p.m.

Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes are a Jersey Shore musical group led by Southside Johnny. They have been recording albums since 1976 and are closely associated with Bruce Springsteen & the E Street Band. They have recorded and/or performed several Springsteen songs, including "The Fever" and "Fade Away".
Tickets: 717-214-ARTS (2787)

KATHLEEN MADIGAN
Majestic Theatre, Gettysburg College
May 21, 7:30 pm

In her 25 year career, Kathleen Madigan has had countless appearances on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "The Late Show with David Letterman," "Late Night with Conan O'Brien" and more. She's had her own specials on HBO and Comedy Central. Madigan also has won the American Comedy Award for "Best Female Comedian" and the Phyllis Diller Award for "Best Female Comedian."
Info: 717-337-8200; boxofficeinfo@gettysburg.edu

Lambda Literary Finalists

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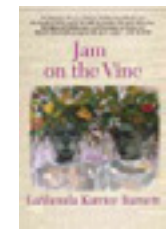
book reviews

By Deborah Battisti & Lori Lane
Dauphin County Library System
www.dcls.org

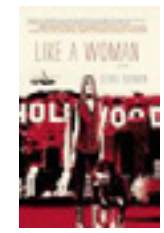
The 28th Annual Lambda Literary Awards finalists were recently announced. During the next few months, we'll highlight some of the excellent works these authors have written. All those listed below are available at The Dauphin County Public Library, in print and/or digital. Visit dcls.org to find the books you want to read.

Jam on the Vine
by LaShonda Katrice Barnett



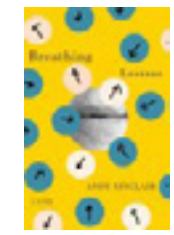
This impassioned debut historical novel is inspired by the life of Ida B. Wells, a pioneering African American journalist. The story follows Ivoe Williams, who with her lover, Ona, starts her own newspaper in Kansas City in 1918, when no newspapers will hire her because of her race or her gender. Ivoe uses her newspaper to hail black accomplishments and expose racism and sanctioned lynching. One reviewer says, "Barnett excels here at what for most writers is a difficult task: evoking what it feels like to grow into one's calling as a writer through psychological intimacy as much as immediate experiences."

Like a Woman
by Debra Busman



Taylor, a working class white girl too tough and too tender for her own good, lives on the streets, reads curled up in the sewer drain at Venice Beach, fights and steals to survive, helps friends and rescues strays. Her girlfriend, Jackson, lives in the back of a limo in a junkyard, and dreams of becoming a writer. With perfect pitch for the street slang her characters use and a nice rhythm in her prose, Busman tells the story of the two young women as they struggle to overcome the lousy hand that life has dealt them.

Breathing Lessons
by Andy Sinclair



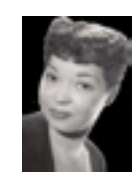
From the publisher - When a teenaged Henry came out to his mother years ago, she worried only that he'd be lonely. At the time, he thought her concerns were old-fashioned. Two decades later, he's had supportive family and friends, he's well-liked by the athletes who train with him, trusted in his professional life, parties whenever he pleases, and performs all manner of sexual acts with whomever he wants. But as he gets older and, increasingly, the men he sleeps with are married, Henry finds that his mother may have been right. Can he find the lasting intimacy he craves in his life amidst the equal-opportunity freedom afforded by his generation's openness?

God in Pink
by Hasan Namir

Ramy is a young, gay Iraqi struggling to find a balance between his sexuality, religion, and culture in a country submerged in warfare in 2003. An eye-opening look at life in Iraq for a man of faith in a society where 'gay' and 'Muslim' are not compatible for most his countrymen and women. od in Pink by Hasan Namiration'ir strays. lousy hand life has dealt them.ing on being a writervoe Ra

Cartoonist, Book Lover, and Hotel Receive Historical Markers

Three recently added state historical markers recently approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) have been added to the nearly 2,300 familiar blue-with-gold-lettering signs that appear along roads and streets throughout PA.



Jackie Ormes, New Eagle, Washington County - The first African American woman cartoonist, Ormes produced a nationally syndicated column in the 1930s for the Pittsburgh Courier, featuring her Torchy Brown character. Although black, the character possessed a sophistication rarely seen in depictions of African Americans at the time. She went on to create similar comic strips that went against stereotype.

Barbara Gittings, Philadelphia - Early LGBT leader who was instrumental in having homosexuality removed from its classification as a mental illness and promoting the inclusion of gay publications in libraries across the nation.

Hotel Brotherhood USA, Philadelphia - One of the earliest African American labor unions, hotel workers established it in 1883 in Philadelphia. The organization began protesting pay inequities as compared to white workers. It also set up a benevolent aid fund for members. It spawned chapters in many major US cities.

Since 1946 PHMC's historical markers have chronicled the people, places and events that have affected the lives of Pennsylvanians over the centuries. The signs feature subjects such as Native Americans and settlers, government and politics, athletes, entertainers, artists, struggles for freedom and equality, factories and businesses and other topics.

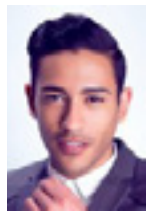
2016 Pride *continued from page 1*

of famed jazz musician Junior Waters and her great aunt is Ethel Waters, one of the first African-American vocalists to appear in mainstream Hollywood musicals," he says.

When you hear the name Crystal Waters, you immediately think of a 20-year Dance/House brand and career that continues to engage her enormous fan base. She was born in Camden, New Jersey, right outside of Philadelphia. As a teenager, Crystal had a chance meeting with a psychic who first inspired her to consider singing. Crystal believed the woman and set about writing "Gypsy Woman". The rest is history. Her accolades include three American Music Award nominations, a MTV Video Music Award nod four Billboard Music Awards and 6 ASCAP Songwriter Awards.

Entertainment

Anthony Bruno, Pop/R&B/Hip-Hop, relocated to York, PA



Anthony Bruno is the Pop, R&B, Hip-Hop artist to watch out for with influences of Mariah Carey, Marc Anthony, Lana Del Rey, Justin Timberlake, Usher, and more. "I want to make the world feel music again. I write from a personal place in my heart and I know people will relate to the stories I have to tell." Anthony hails from New York, but relocated to York, Pennsylvania to continue the recording process. This move turned out to be the best thing that could happen to this young artist. Bruno released his debut album "The Tunnels Project" on December 1, 2015. "I want my album to have many different genres and sounds because that is what makes a true artist to me. I want to make music anyone can listen to and appreciate."

Mama's Black Sheep, Acoustic/Country/Rock/Blues

Mama's Black Sheep is an Acoustic/Country/Rock/Blues team with two amazing voices, a dash of humor, a touch of love, and some outrageously strong musicianship. Mix 'em all together, stir well, and you've got the recipe for a great time.
Locally based just outside of Pennsylvania, Mama's Black Sheep has been touring together since 2008. With two well received CD's to their credit(Unmarked Highway, 2010; Drivin' On, 2011) and a third in the works, Mama's Black Sheep has been burning up the road touring extensively throughout the continental US and the Caribbean playing nearly 200 shows a year.

York-based Lamberto Otto Bautista, Spanish/R&B/Hip-Hop

Lamberto Otto Bautista is a rising Latin artist based locally in York, Lamberto has outstanding vocals with influences by Selena, Ricky Martin, Kat Deluna, Marc Anthony, Gloria Estefan, Enrique Iglesias, Romeo Santos, and Daddy Yankee. Lamberto was born in Mexico City, Mexico and now lives in York.
Bautista has performed in various local events and is now concentrating his passionate musical talents at AK Beatz, an audio production team dedicated to creating quality music.

The AKT, Acoustic / Alternative Rock

The AKT is an Acoustic/Alternative Rock team locally based in York. Zack's outstanding vocals along with great support from Chad and AJ, The AKT provides energy with a soulful alternative rock sound to their consistent growing fans! The group recently released its first official music video "Love Calls".

Diane Bedford-Wilson, Jazz, Soul, Disco/Pop, and Gospel

Diane Wilson Bedford is entral-Pennsylvania-based Jazz, Soul, Disco/Pop, and Gospel artist. She has built an outstanding supporting fan group since 1975. Performing tunes by Chaka Khan, Natalie Cole and Stephanie Mills, Diane had the honor and pleasure to tour with a local group called Positive Force, which lead to the group's first hit "We Got The Funk".
Diane's talented life took her to another local group, Paradise Jam and then began to mentor Miss Tiffany Purnell, a backup singer for Teena Marie. Diane Performed with them for the next 12 years.
Diane lost her voice in 1991 and was told she had a 50/50 chance to be able to sing. After a 2 year break, Diane returned to the music world and performed with The Lady & The Duke, Vinyl Groove, and more. In 2007, Diane was crowned The 2007 Miss Pa. State Senior Idol. Diane continues to perform popular Jazz, Soul, Disco, and her first love gospel throughout the local areas.

Reminicient of Robert Mapplethorpe

Local Fine Art Photographer Stewart A. Startles & Amuses

By Central Voice

Photography is nothing more than "painting with light," Stewart A. tells *Central Voice*.

He uses that simple but difficult to achieve technique to great advantage. His work, reminiscent of Robert Mapplethorpe, was recently showcased at The Metropolis Collective, Mechanicsburg.

"I approached my 'paintings' by revealing little glimpses of the subject, allowing for the mystery of the unknown to be present," He says. "Where a painter's blank canvas is white, mine is blackness with the absence of light. I choose what to reveal to the viewer by only placing light on the parts that I want to be shown."

His work is suggestive of the master photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. But like any artist, Stewart A. takes what he sees in Mapplethorpe's work and evolves it into his own expressions, making the finished product his own. Using both color and black and white images, he amuses and startles by what he reveals in his photographs. His work is not all dark.

> I strive to communicate with anyone brave enough to want to listen.

The "Eros" recent exhibit at Metropolis is a collection of both color and black and white "because I feel that they highlight different aspects of sexuality and desire," he explains. Some moments are all about adoration of an archetype personified, some need the grit and primal emotion that vibrant colors provide. Often the contrast of a subtle skin tone creeping in and out of the shadows is erotic enough to drive the entire piece."

Stewart A. was born and raised in Carlisle and is a graduate of The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Photography. His work focuses on the strange, the taboo, the alluring and is often autobiographical. "In daily life I am unapologetic about my views and experience, ever more so when it comes to my art. I strive to communicate with anyone brave enough to want to listen. I observe and I create, this is what it means to be an artist," he says.

"I approached my (photographic) 'paintings' by revealing little glimpses of the subject, allowing for the mystery of the unknown to be present," He says. "Where a painter's blank canvas is white, mine is blackness with the absence of light. I choose what to reveal to the viewer by only placing light on the parts that I want to be shown."

"Many great minds throughout all of human history have added something to the discourse on Eros, and this small assemblage is my contribution. I offer it to titilate you, to scare you, to get your heart rate up," Stewart says to his audience.

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"The Harris Project" by Artist Bryan Molloy Exhibits through June 30

"The Harris Project" by artist Bryan Molloy is a well-researched interpretation of the story of Harrisburg's founder John Harris being rescued from burning at the stake by hostile Indians.

Molloy is a Gallery Assistant at The Art Association of Harrisburg and maintains his art studio in downtown Harrisburg.

The Harris Project is presented until June 30 at the Harrisburg City Government Center under the auspices of the Art Association of Harrisburg's Community Exhibition Program.

Painted lavishly in oils in historic genre-melding technical virtuosity, and using custom-made costumes and local craftsmen, the six-foot –wide panoramic scene features an actual descendent of John Harris, posing as John Harris himself.

A former Broadway dancer posed for the figure of the heroic rescuing chief. Secret ancient historical information, celestial symbolism, and fantastic artistic technique are delivered within the composition arrangements and careful selection of colors and elements, including the use of the Lost Angles Process and Renaissance Pattern Echoing.

The research phase alone took over six years of pouring intensively through historical records in many universities and museums throughout the world, and formed the foundation for the project. The final painting itself took more than three years of meticulous patience and dedicated attention to detail and technique.

Meth Epidemic Among Gay Men

By Central Voice

The meth epidemic among gay men has worsened. User rates are up across the US. But a new book offers hope for recovery.

"Lust, Men and Meth: A Gay Man's Guide to Sex and Recovery" is by nationally prominent Florida-based psychotherapist, Dr. David Fawcett. He's been working with gay men on meth for 10 years and has started several task forces on the issue.

Illuminated by dozens of genuine case studies, Lust, Men, and Meth presents a guide to recovery from meth. Indispensable for healthcare professionals, Lust, Men and Meth offers a diagnostic roadmap for the therapeutic work necessary to guide a client towards attaining sexual and emotional intimacy that is disconnected from meth use, as well as relapse-prevention skills. The book helps professionals address issues of self-esteem and sexual intimacy that fuel addictive behavior among gay men, as well as HIV transmission dangers increased by meth use.

David Fawcett, Ph.D.

Fawcett's book is divided into three parts: The Perfect Storm, assessing the components of individual personality traits and gay cultural norms that invite the opportunity for meth addiction; Exploring the Sexual Universe, exploring how meth can rewire a gay man's approach to sexuality, resulting in risky behavior and seroconversion; and Restoring Your Life, providing seven tools for recovery from meth and restoring drug-free intimacy.

Bio: David Fawcett, PhD, is a psychotherapist and writer. His work in gay men's health, addictions and recovery spans three decades.

Info: http://david-fawcett.com

Central PA Womyn's Chorus Concerts

The mid-state's only all-female lesbian and feminist chorus - Central PA Womyn's Chorus - perform their Spring Concert: Plant a Tree of Peace Sat., May 21, 7:30 p.m. at the Trindle Spring Lutheran Church, 14 State Road, Mechanicsburg, and 4:00PM on Sun., May 22, 4 p.m. York Unitarian Church, 925 South George St.

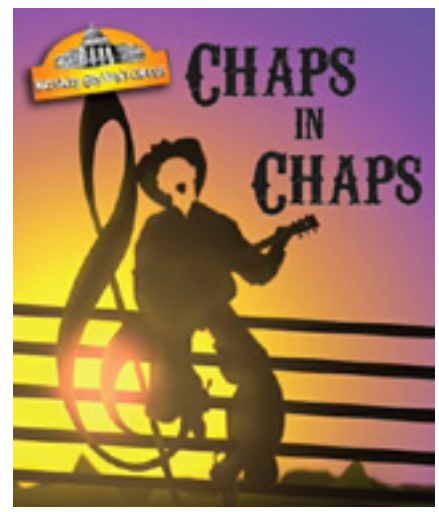
Under the direction of the talented Jordan R. Markham, our Peabody Conservatory trained Director, the Chorus will perform songs that inspire serenity, cooperation, respect and all the ideals we imagine in a more perfect world. The chorus will be joined by a small group of area musicians, and will feature pieces such as Study War No More, Prayer of the Children, and Song of the Universal. Tickets are $15.00 each. Concert goers will also receive a gift of Spring.

Our mission: The Central Pennsylvania Womyn's Chorus brings together a diverse group of women, united by the joy of singing, to celebrate and empower women and to affirm a positive image of lesbians and feminists.

The Chorus is recognized for musical excellence in a wide range of styles, including classical, folk, jazz, a cappella, rounds, show tunes and popular songs of the 20th century. For the past 21 years, the Chorus has performed all across the Central Pennsylvania: at the Pennsylvania State Museum for the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network, for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and nationally as the opening act for Holly Near, with Emma's Revolution and backup singers for Judy Collins.

Concert and ticket information: (717) 564-0112; www.cpwchorus.org

"Chaps in Chaps" - Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus Country Music Concerts



Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus whoops it up across the region with "Chaps in Chaps".

Join the popular choir Sat., May 7, 7:30 p.m. at Heidelberg United Church of Christ, 47 W. Philadelphia St., York for a "free will" donation concert. Free admission is made possible by grants from The Arts for All Partnership and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Then on Sat., May 14, 8 p.m. they perform at Black Box Theater, Penn State Harrisburg Campus, 777 W. Harrisburg Pike, Middletown. General admission is $15.

Saddle up your horses and get ready to ride as the HGMC guys go a little bit country, featuring songs from Garth Brooks, The Eagles, Dolly Parton, Willie Nelson, Patti Page and more. They'll gallantly gallop across the wide open range to bring the audience a little bit closer to country.

The Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus celebrates the LGBT experience in song and performance, fosters a greater appreciation of the male choral musical tradition, nurtures members in their artistic and personal growth, and enriches the region through entertainment and positive interaction.

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Beyond Same-sex Marriage Attitudes on LGBT Nondiscrimination

Americans are largely supportive of LGBT nondiscrimination laws and opposed to religious exemptions, finds a new PRRI report that is drawn from PRRI's massive American Values Atlas, a landmark survey based on more than 42,000 inteviews conducted in 2015.

The report is called Beyond Same-sex Marriage: Attitudes on LGBT Nondiscrimination Laws and Religious Exemptions.

As states across the country prepare for legislative battles – more than 100 pieces of proposed legislation are now in state house - around LGBT nondiscrimination and religious exemption laws, PRRI's new report finds that 71% of Americans -- including majorities in all 50 states and 30 major metropolitan areas -- support laws that would protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people from discrimination in jobs, housing, and public accommodations.

The survey also finds that roughly six in ten (59%) Americans oppose allowing small business owners in their state to refuse service to gay and lesbian people if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.

Anti-Gay Hate Groups on Rise

Seven organizations were added to the Southern Poverty Law Center's list of active anti-LGBT hate groups in 2015, in a sign of increasing backlash over recent gay-rights victories including the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in favor of nationwide marriage equality last June.

The surge in anti-LGBT organizations contributed to a 14 percent increase in the total number of hate groups in 2015, from 784 in 2014 to 892. It was the first overall increase in five years, and SPLC said thanks to politicians like Donald Trump — who graces the cover of its annual "Intelligence Report" released Wednesday — the nation is more polarized and angry than it's been since the political turmoil of 1968.

The Montgomery, Alabama civil rights group listed 48 organizations as anti-LGBT hate groups in 2015, up from 44 in 2014, as a few from previous years became inactive. The number of anti-LGBT hate groups has nearly doubled since 2011, when there were only 27.

"These groups have had a series of losses that have them in a white-hot fury," SPLC senior fellow Potok told The New Civil Rights Movement. "People who resent LGBT people and the gains they've made are organizing, but it's very much a rear-guard action. These groups are really vile and nasty, but they're losing the battle, and ultimately they're going to lose the war."

In the face of mounting losses in the U.S., Potok said more anti-LGBT groups are turning their attention overseas, leading efforts to make homosexuality illegal in some countries. Anti-LGBT hate groups are also increasingly targeting transgender people, which contributed to an increase in anti-trans violence last year, including at least 23 murders.

"Transgender people, and in particular transgender women of color, are the single most victimized group of people in the United States," Potok said. "These are people whom it is apparently still alright to hate."

In addition to anti-LGBT backlash, the overall spike in hate groups was fueled mostly by new Ku Klux Klan chapters and black separatist groups, as well as anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim organizations, SPLC said.

"While the number of extremist groups grew in 2015 after several years of declines, the real story was the deadly violence committed by extremists in city after city," Potok said. "Whether it was Charleston, San Bernardino or Colorado Springs, 2015 was clearly a year of deadly action for extremists.

"After seeing the bloodshed that defined 2015, our politicians should have worked to defuse this anger and bring us together as a nation," Potok said. "Unfortunately, the carnage did little to dissuade some political figures from spouting incendiary rhetoric about minorities. In fact, they frequently exploited the anger and polarization across the country for political gain."

Seven new anti-LGBT hate groups in 2015:
HATE
• The Campus Ministry USA of Terre Haute, Indiana
• Citizens for Community Values in Cincinnati, Ohio
• Conservative Republicans of Texas in Houston, Texas
• D. James Kennedy Ministries in Fort Lauderdale, Florida
• Faith Baptist Church in Greenville, Georgia (formerly Sons of Thundr)
• Faith2Action in North Royalton, Ohio
• The Friendship Assembly of God in Colorado Springs, Colorado

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History Project

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equality for state employees. 40 years later we're still fighting for the same right to be protected against discrimination for every other LGBT Pennsylvanian." Pennsylvania does not have employment and public accommodations protections. " That's crazy and it simply shouldn't take four decades to ensure under the law that people be treated fairly in employment, housing and business services because of who they are or who they love."

Martin is referring to The Fairness Act, a bill that includes such protections within the state's Human Relations Commission. "Passing this law says we respect our citizens, cherish fairness and want to create an environment where everyone is happy to live, raise families, support and open businesses and make a good life," Martin says.

Harrisburg realtor Ray Davis (left) hosted "Hot History/Cold Night" a cocktail party fundraiser for the LGBT Center of Central PA History Project on February 18. Enjoying the evening were William Burton of Philadelphia (center), who has written LGBT history articles for Central Voice writer, and Teddy Maurer, a member of the steering committee for the History Project. More than 50 people attended the event raising about $2,000.

- Photo by Barry Loveland.

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Black Lesbian Conference

The Evolution of Our Community

By Winnie McCroy
Central Voice NYC Correspondent

A sold-out crowd of 200 women headed to New York City's Barnard College on March 25-26 for "The Evolution of Our Community," The Black Lesbian Conference.

Here is a summary of the major discussions held during the event.

Karen Thompson, Yoruba Richen, and Dr. Judith Casselberry led "What Does It Mean to Draw a Line? Black Female Bodies and Strategies of Self-Segregation. Thompson, staff attorney with The Innocence Project, examinedhow the law perpetuates racism via the 2008 case of the "New Jersey Four," a group of young Newark lesbians assaulted on the streets of Greenwich Village by a man after rejecting his advances. When one fought back with a penknife, police labeled it a 'gang assault,' and all were arrested.

"Patrice got seven years in prison for defending herself. All of them got time for just saying 'no,'" said Thompson. "Self-defense doesn't count if you are a female saying you don't want to have sex, or if you are a lesbian rejecting male advances. Black women understand our bodies are under attack, that we can't say 'no.'"

Panelists discussed the government's chokehold on women's rights, including abortion, and examined how the media perpetuates these inequalities.

"Our history has been made invisible. It is not taught or seen in the mainstream media," said documentary filmmaker Richen. "When media is not produced by us, our images are stereotyped and flattened. When we are in charge of our own image, not only is our experience recognized, validated, and understood, but we are liberated."

Examples of this dichotomy were shown via the 1996 film "Set It Off," in which Queen Latifah plays a butch lesbian, head of a crew of female bank robbers. All characters who function outside the mainstream are killed off.

"But when we get the chance to create our own depictions, there is a very different result," said Richen, citing Cheryl Dunye's "The WatermelonWoman"; Dee Rees'coming-of-age story "Pariah," and her biopic "Bessie Smith."

Casselberry spoke about the impact of black women on the 30-year-old Michigan Womyn's Music Festival, especially its anthem, "Amazon." She teamed up with ToshiReagon to create a reggae version, and in 2003, they "stepped into our full erotic power of saying 'yes' to ourselves and others, as black female acoustics were critical to how the festival started."

"Black lesbians worked in coalitions; they were not separatists," said Casselberry. "They had to face race, class, and sexual privileges, identity politics, gender expression and issues of belonging. But we took the stage, we created a Women of Color tent, and made a safe haven to access unfiltered visions of ourselves."

Attendees also discussed "The State of the Black Lesbian Community: An Intergenerational Perspective." Moderator Mignon Moore welcomed Imani Rashid, Director of LGBT Kwanzaa Community; Tina Jones, Director of Health and Education Alternatives for Teens; and Ryann Holmes of BklynBoihood.

Moore, who did one of the first sociological studies on black lesbian families, said 4.6% of African-Americans are LGBT, with 53% of these women likely raising children. They tend to partner with other black women, are heavier, get tested for HIV/STDs, and rate a higher overall quality of life, despite a lower income. Although lesbian couples earned more than women in different-sex couples, black lesbians didn't.

Income differences are drastic among same- and different-sex black couples. There are extremely high rates of Latino youth and black LGBTs in foster care. On the other end of the spectrum, older black lesbians are at risk.

Priestess, performer and visionary entrepreneur Imani Rashid spoke to this, saying, "I am concerned about the health of aging black lesbians. It is so important to make our bodies our own priority, as well as our minds and spirits. We must pass our experiences to the generation behind us, so they won't make the same mistakes. We must make aging more graceful, and put energy into raising those coming up behind us."

Jones, who does HIV outreach to LGBT youth, said she is trying to "get the message out to young women of color to get tested." Holmes added, "We also want to empower and make visible queer, non-gender conforming people of color. Being connected to Imani and other elders is so important. I had never met anyone older that had swagger and was confident, who shared their stories of doing this work. We need to harness the power and resources already in our community to effect change."

Another session focused on "Sacred Erotica: Creatively Moving Shadows Into Light" and "Sex and Sexuality" (See sidebar, p. XX). Participants also learned about "Creating Financial Wellness for LGBTQ Women."

R. Erica Doyle led a panel on "Black Lesbian Poets: Bringing the Political To The Page and Stage," featuring poets Amber Atiya, Monica Hand, and JP Howard. Panelists read their own poems, then shared the works of favorite poets.

"How do we unpack who we are?" asked Atiya, reading her poem about "buckras," Southern slang for'the white man.' She broached the anti-transgender legislation in North Carolina, via footage of a young black transwoman dancing in front of the State House, saying, "she is presenting her beauty and identity in the face of state-sanctioned violence."

The conference closed with, "Black

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A 'Sexversation' about What Women Really Want

By Winnie McCroy
Central Voice NYC Correspondent

The Black Lesbian Conference presented "Sex and Sexuality," featuring Gabby Santos, Director of LGBT Health Services for In Our Own voices; TandraLaGrone, Executive Director of In Our Own Voices; Vanessa Campus, Community Health Educator for GMHC; and Community AdvocateLorna Blake.This panel was afree-flowing conversation about sexual health, safer sex and sexual pleasure.

Candor was the keyword. Via anonymous texts, participants answered questions, "When was the last time you had sex" and "Do you have a nickname for your sex toy?"LaGrone explored the idea of owning names, including those that fall into the fantasy realm, saying, "The language you use has to do with where you are. It's 'vagina' at the doctor's office, but not in bed."

"In world that says,'hush hush, don't talk about it,'we need language to define things," said Santos, sharing the example of talking to transwomen and gay men about using female condoms, which work for receptive partners. "We limit ourselves in the way we label things. Language creates norms, and norms dictate allocation of resources."

Echoed LaGrone, "We need to know this language, and have honest conversations about sexuality."The honesty came pouring forth, as women discussed the vagina's natural odor, dental dams, STIs/HIV, HPV, oral sex, douching, pubic hair, masturbation, penetration and sex toys.

"Eighty-six percent of participants have used them," said LaGrone. "But some are still against these 'heteronormative' practices. There's the idea that you are less 'lesbian' if you do so, but you shouldn't be afraid."

One participant said we "need to stop disowning certain parts of pleasure," while another contended a past relationship ended because her partner "had a problem with masturbating too much, so she was not ready to have sex together, to the point where I was wondering if she was even lesbian."

"Your brain is what's going to make you orgasm," said Santos. "Even when masturbating, you know what images get you off." Whether that involves sex toys or not was secondary.

As Blake said, "In my day, we bumped pocketbooks, and it was amazing! But we still talk about sex as if it were something taboo. Sex is a beautiful thing between two individuals, but if you are not in a safe space for intimate conversations with your partner, how are they supposed to know what you want?"

Rape or sexual abuse can figure into this, as "sexual trauma can prohibit them from participating in sexual activities; if they were sexually molested as child or a victim of rape, they can push their sexuality under the rug," said Campus. "But with a caring partner you can talk about it, and release that pain."

But overall, women should embrace their sexuality, be open about the language they use to discuss it, employ good sexual hygiene, and engage in safer sex practices. Because at the end of the day, the 'sexversation' you have with you partner will bring you closer to fulfillment than fumbling around in the shadows, trying to reason your way to pleasure.

As participant Mistinguette Smith quipped, "Idealogy has done a lot for me in life, but it's never given me an orgasm."

Black Lesbian Conference *cont'd*

Lesbians and Activism: From the '70s to Now," with moderator Alexis Pauline Gumbs leading Linda Villarosa, Shawn(t)a Smith-Cruz, and Cassandra Grant.

Gumbs, a former Barnard student, said, "During a time when we didn't even want to say the word lesbian, it was something to enter a room full of women who looked like yourself." In Greenwich Village at that time, there were meetings for every group, but none for black lesbians.

"We weren't on their agenda, so we had to create our own agenda," said Grant. "Sometimes you have to separate to come together, you have to be apart to be strong. We were more than our sexuality, and we needed more than that, because we were shut out of our own community, and racism and classism became more prevalent."

Smith-Cruz spoke about being a board member of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, an intergenerational space that honors the history of all lesbians — not just famous ones.

"It's a myth that we weren't organizing in the '70s, like with black people throughout time," said Smith-Cruz. "There was a box full of material, because these women chose to archive themselves. I challenge everyone to be an archivist, to go to an elders' house and record their stories."

GLAAD-award nominee Linda Villarosaalso spoke about the Archives, and the groundbreaking articles she wrote for Ebony and Essence.

"I came of age as a black warrior feminist journalist in the 1990s, the height of visibility, when if you come out, that was your identity politics," said Villarosa. "Writing came easy to me, and I was working at Essence, with a platform of eight billion readers. So I wrote about mothers and daughters, about love and coming out."

Although everyone may not have the platform she did, Villarosa encouraged them to access new media and share their stories online, saying, "AudreLorde was all about the work, not about sitting around talking. If we do nothing else, we must find a way to connect with each other."

Black Homophobia

New Survey Debunks the Myth

By Zack Ford
Think Progress

For many years, there has been a myth that African Americans are more likely to be homophobic and thus more likely to oppose advances for LGBT equality. Conservatives have even tried to leverage this supposed wedge to slow the progress of equality. A new survey, however, not only debunks the myth, but suggests that the black community is one of the LGBT community's strongest allies.

The Myth

After California passed Proposition 8, a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage, The Advocate magazine asked on its cover, "Gay Is The New Black?" Following the lead set by Dan Savage in his "Black Homophobia" post the day after the 2008 election, the cover story relied on exit polls from the election that seemed to suggest that even though black voters largely supported Barack Obama for president, they also largely supported Prop 8.

This mythical divide between the two communities has persisted in the years since, despite the fact that the Prop 8 numbers were later debunked. Just last year, for example, writer Michael Arceneaux called out Lee Daniels for his claim that his television show Empire would "blow the lid off homophobia" in the black community, when it actually seemed to be reinforcing the myth. "Blacks are not the X-Men of anti-gay bigotry," he wrote. "We don't have some superior level of homophobia compared to other groups."

Opponents of LGBT equality have, in turn, tried to capitalize on the supposed black/gay divide. A 2009 National Organization for Marriage (NOM) strategy memo revealed a blatant attempt to "drive a wedge between gays and blacks" by convincing black people not to see same-sex marriage as a civil right.

But NOM's strategy didn't work, and as new research from the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) demonstrates, it didn't work for the exact reason that they thought it would.

The Survey

PRRI's massive survey focused on three general questions: support for marriage equality, support for LGBT nondiscrimination protections, and support for "religious refusal" exemptions — allowing businesses to refuse service to LGBT people based on their religious beliefs.

Support for marriage equality was a bit low among Black Protestants, with only 38 percent supporting and 54 percent opposing. But on the other two measures, Black Protestants overwhelmingly supported LGBT equality. They favored nondiscrimination laws 64-31, and on the question of religious refusals, black respondents actually opposed exemptions at higher rates than any other racial group, including white respondents:

PRRI results indicated –

Religious Refusals: Among all respondents, those who supported marriage equality tended to also support nondiscrimination laws, while opponents of marriage equality were more divided. The swing among black respondents seemed to be particularly compelling, so Think Progress reached out to PRRI to see if there were more answers in the numbers.

As it turns out, marriage equality and nondiscrimination protections are simply two very different questions for black respondents. For example, among black Protestants who oppose same-sex marriage, a 51 percent majority still favor LGBT nondiscrimination protections — albeit not quite as strongly:

Black Protestants Marriage LGBT: Likewise, black Protestants who opposed marriage equality still overwhelmingly opposed (62-34) allowing businesses to discriminate for religious reasons:

Black Protestants Marriage Religious Refusals: PRRI also examined whether identifying as a Protestant itself motivated how respondents felt about LGBT protections. Overall, black Protestants supported the protections at almost identical rates as those who did not identify as Protestants.

Black Protestants or not LGBT: Likewise, identifying as a Protestant had little impact on whether black respondents opposed allowing religious refusals:

Continued on following page

Childlike Wonderment

Don't you love the way words can be used? Learning new words and how those words came about can be an exciting experience for me. Our spoken and written American English (only one of over 130 different English dialects) has become a potpourri of other languages, rich with foreign cultures and multiple ethnicities.

The words we use in our everyday speech are an extension of our thinking. The thoughts we consciously acknowledge, added to the powerful subconscious mental pictures we carry with us, are the powerful catalysts that create our individual and collective experiences. How we choose to use our language will further reinforce this process.

Subtle nuances can mean the difference between an insult and a compliment. Take the two words childlike and childish. Childlike can bring to mind a feeling of warmth and innocence associated with the remarks and actions of kids as they grow into teenagers and adults. The wonderment of a child with the smallest detail (a dandelion or a pebble, for example) makes us smile. What simplicity!

Referring to the personality of an adult as childlike usually means the person is simple, uncomplicated and endearing. Childlike is used with a positive feeling in both cases.

But childish, on the other hand, is normally used negatively. A parent who tells a son or daughter they are being childish is implying they are acting inappropriately for what is expected at their level of maturity. When a toy is grabbed away from two-year old Joey he may immediately start bawling. If we grab sixteen year-old Marcy's cell phone away from her while she's texting with her new romantic interest, we would expect her to react quite differently – perhaps with a litany of language we may not appreciate. To start crying immediately would not be an expected response from her – unless, of course, she finds out her service provider just cut out her unlimited data plan.

making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

As we grow into adulthood we give up certain attitudes and activities of childhood. There are some things from our childhood we might want to bring back to our adult lives. Our busy world can force us into dealing with far too much at once. Children are not so affected. Try having a conversation with any kid playing a video game and you might as well be talking to a brick wall. They become totally engrossed in what they are doing.

When was the last time you experienced that! I am referring to feeling the childlike wonderment of a full moon, the patterns of clouds in the sky, the way the fog drapes over the valleys, or just lovingly watch your significant other sleep.

Can you sit and watch a pet play on the floor without wondering who emailed you in the last two minutes? Can you sit in one of our beautiful parks … and just sit? Not talk, not meditate and not make lists about what to do next … just sit?

Some would say, WHAT a waste of time! A childlike fascination with the intimate, and often time ignored, details of our lives brings us back to the really important things in life: appreciation of friends and family; having a place to live; being thankful for having a job; or just being able to go where we want when we want.

Some of these examples may not be showing up in your life right now the way you would like. You may be in severe need in some area. I invite you to begin appreciating with childlike innocence all the good in your life. As we continue to acknowledge what we have, our good will increase; our lives and our community will become more satisfying, peaceful and abundant. May you be blessed with a childlike pleasure of all that is yours.

Terry is an author, speaker, licensed social worker and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at Central Voice online or on his website at: blog.terrydrewkaranen.com. He is also the director of Spirit, Mind and Body Foundation (spiritmindbodyfoundation.org).

CIA Recruiting Transgender Candidates

As first reported by The Washington Free Beacon, the CIA's three-year "Diversity and Inclusion Strategy" says "dedicated programs" are in place to recruit individuals from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, as well as from the LGBT community and elsewhere.

Program material says:

"We will continue to enrich our workforce by targeting diverse communities across the United States to meet our talent needs, with dedicated programs for citizens of African, Asian, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Native American descent; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals; Persons with Disabilities; Veterans; and Women."

Progress toward these goals will be measured.

The three-year plan says they will monitor the "diversity and gender break-down" for recruiting trends – and resignations – and use so-called "inclusion index measures to identify trends of the elements necessary for creating a diverse and inclusive environment."

The strategy is not contained to recruitment. According to the plan, the CIA will hold agency-wide "unconscious bias training" as well.

"Diversity and inclusion must become an integral part of our culture to position the Agency to compete for and retain top talent and cultivate a qualified bench of future leaders. Deliberative processes combined with greater diversity and inclusion awareness will help combat unconscious bias and foster fair and equitable decision-making," the plan says.

Commission on African American Affairs Sworn In

At a recent closed ceremony at the Governor's Residence, the Governor's Advisory Commission on African American Affairs (GACAAA) was sworn in by Gov. Tom Wolf and Deputy Secretary of State Peter Speaks.

"I am thrilled to stand with this outstanding group of leaders in our state's African American community," said Gov. Wolf. "This commission will benefit the commonwealth by defining and addressing the unique contributions, needs, and concerns of the African American community. Their work will improve the lives of all Pennsylvanians."

The GACAAA was re-established under the Wolf Administration as the commonwealth's advocate agency for its African American citizens in August 2015. The commission serves seven main functions but mainly to advise gov. Wolf on policies, procedures, legislation, and regulations that affect the African American community.

The commission is chaired by Ahmeenah Young. The local, Central Region member is Rev. Aaron Wilford, Pastor, Bethlehem Baptist Church.

Homophobia *continued from page 25*

Black Protestants or not Religious Refusals

It also turns out that, like religion, geography isn't even a factor for black support of LGBT nondiscrimination protections. Alabama and Mississippi were two states PRRI identified as having some of the lowest support nationwide, but black Protestants in those states still supported LGBT protections and opposed religious refusals at fairly similar rates to the rest of the country.

Dr. Robert Jones, CEO of PRRI, told Think Progress that even on the question of marriage equality, black Protestants are more ambivalent than white evangelical Protestants, who oppose same-sex marriage at much higher rates. On LGBT nondiscrimination protections and religious refusals, their support flips. "I think that's about really their own experience with discrimination," he explained.

"The thing that African Americans and evangelicals have in common is a very strong connection to religion and particularly religion that has a fairly literal view of the Bible. They have high levels of religious attendance and fairly traditional religious beliefs, and I think that leads to some ambivalence on the issue of marriage equality."

But on nondiscrimination, there's a real "parting of the ways," he said, "where an experience as a racial minority is informing and influencing their views on these issues that it just doesn't among white evangelicals."

Isaiah Wilson, external affairs manager of the National Black Justice Coalition, agreed. Calling the survey "refreshing," Wilson told Think Progress that he was "not at all surprised" by black respondents' support for LGBT protections.

"Black communities are broad, diverse and share a deep understanding of inequality gained from a common history and experience. We collectively know how it feels to be systemically oppressed and rejected by the state and that is not morally right for any group," he said.

He conceded that there is still more work to be done on the divisiveness over marriage, but noted that "the majority support of young black respondents is the silver lining and shows that as we continue to move forward support will grow."

The survey also addresses the biggest problem in the mythical divide between black and queer communities: the erasure of people who identify with both. "The survey made me reflect on the fact that there are over one million self-identifying black LGBTQ people who are living their truth for all to observe, including their families," Wilson shared. "This plays a major role in the way our communities are dealing with the issues of LGBT equality and overall acceptance."

Moving Forward

What Jones felt was one of the most important takeaways from the survey is the fact that there is broad national consensus on protecting LGBT people from discrimination. "We're used to a lot of divisions and debates around marriage equality — even that over the years has become less contentious," he said. "But what's remarkable is that the place where there is probably the most consensus — on nondiscrimination laws — is also the place where we have the biggest patchwork of laws on the ground. It's a little ironic."

The Supreme Court established marriage equality nationwide, but 28 states still offer no statewide nondiscrimination protections.

Wilson agreed, pointing out that the work that needs to be done is the same across the board. "The state of homophobia within the black community is only a reflection of the broader American culture, which finds itself in a continuous evolution in favor of the demands that define the LGBTQ equality movement." He hopes that increased visibility of LGBT people will continue to advance acceptance and inclusion.

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